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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

JOHN MAHON — THE GREATER LONDON COUNCIL

JOHN WILLIAMSON — THE NEGRO FREEDOM MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

JAMES HARVEY — ANTONIO GRAMSCI

DISCUSSION:

PAUL OESTREICHER — DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND MARXISM

MARGOT HEINEMANN — MARXISM AND CRITICISM

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Marxism Today

Vol. 11 No. 4

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Editorial Comments

THE right-wing monthly *Socialist Commentary* for February carried a series of articles on the political aspects of the Common Market which are worth noting. Mr. Sam Silkin, MP, who is chairman of the Labour Party's Common Market and European Affairs Group for example, seeks to examine Mr. Gaitskell's conditions for entering the Market laid down in 1962. Commenting on the condition "freedom to pursue our own foreign policy", Mr. Sam Silkin says:

> "Whatever the reality of this fear in 1962 may have been in 1966, it looks decidedly odd in the light of de Gaulle's freedom to pursue a foreign policy which diverges sharply both from that of France's NATO allies and from that of her EEC partners."

Mr. Eric Heffer, MP, says the same thing. Outside the Common Market we are under the domination of the USA; inside we will be as free as de Gaulle.

But Mr. Roy Price of the University of Sussex by no means agrees. He thinks that the European Economic Community will go forward to federal political organisation.

> "The Six have already tried on more than one occasion to go forward from economic to political union—which in Community jargon means a common foreign and defence policy. Their past failures should not lead us to suppose that the idea is dead."

Mr. Price goes on to tell us that "in many important respects economic policy making has shifted from the National to the Community level where it is increasingly in the hands of technocrats and representatives of interest groups." So he wants an elected European Parliament to crown the lot. So much for national independence.

Mr. John Pinder admits that "the British Government in its current approach to the EEC has taken care to state clearly that it disagrees with the view shared by the Governments of the Five that a common foreign policy formulated by the Community method is indeed a desirable aim". He goes on to argue that what is needed is a European Defence Community:

> "A constructive British diplomacy, not content to be stuck crag-fast on the crumbling rocks of the status quo would find that a European Defence Community could provide two essential elements for a solution. It could have a larger population than Russia, and could thus, when it had time to become consolidated, be big enough to act as a counter-weight to Russia in terms of conventional forces, even if the American armies withdraw, and it would act as a complete safeguard against the unilateral exercise of national power by Germany."
>
> "The way to liquidate the problems raised by a German nation-state, is to integrate Germany, together with the neighbouring states of a similar size, *into a union in which the nation-state is no longer a decisive power factor.*"

So bang goes national independence. Lest the lesson should not have been driven home far enough a postscript tells us that "these articles have demonstrated that the Community transcends 'economics' and that if Europe does develop into a world power, its influence, particularly if Britain is a participant, is likely to be beneficient rather than disruptive."

Here is the European vision of some of the supporters of the Common Market. Britain is not to be an independent country but a fragment of a West European world power. The division of Europe between East and West is obviously perpetuated by such policies.

Counting the Cost

Following Mr. Douglas Jay's remarks on the Common Market, Mr. Stephen Brown, the President of the Confederation of British Industries wrote to *The Times* (February 10th) to say that the CBI was in favour of entering the Market because:

1. There would be a clear and progressive balance of advantage to British industry from membership of an enlarged European Community.
2. The Treaty of Rome and the Community's method of operation are acceptable *given reasonable transitional arrangements*, and
3. Entry should be negotiated as soon as possible.

The part we have italicised is the Marketeer's get-out and amounts to no more than saying "if the Market can help us for a number of years by innumerable concessions we will go in".

The CBI argues that the advantages of entry may "far outweigh the short-term penalties which membership of an enlarged community may bring".

What Mr. Jay spelt out was what would happen if the expected concessions did *not* materialise to a sufficient extent. Dr. W. Beckerman, of Oxford, finds that Mr. Jay's estimates are modest and is of the opinion that "the total adverse effect on the

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current balance might well be in the region of £800 million per annum". Perhaps some Marketeers will tell us how a policy which will enormously increase Britain's balance of payments may be regarded as a cure for Britain's economic ills.

Freedom—Not to Plan

The question of the effect on sterling of British entry into the Common Market is discussed in *The Listener* (February 23rd) by Susan Strong, who tells us that:

> "We have been desperately anxious to put right our payments problem. But they have seen us put off effective deflationary policies to the last minute and have tried everything else—import surcharges, capital controls, credit squeezes, and so on—first; *yet these are precisely the weapons we should be expected to stop using within the Community if we joined.* Who can honestly say that we should not be badly tempted to try them again, if the next crisis hits us again in, say, 1970 or 1971?" (Italics ours.)

This is surely the answer to those supporters of entry who are constantly telling us that the Market does not interfere with economic planning. It is true that no less authorities than the late John Foster Dulles and Dr. Erhard of Western Germany thought so in the past and said so specifically, but of course there are Market States with plans, as the French example shows. What is undeniable, however, as Susan Strong states, is that if a Market country faces a balance of payments difficulty, there are certain planning instruments—such as import surcharges, import controls, controls over capital exports—that one must not use. Forbidden to use them, one must accept the inevitable unemployment as Italy had to do in 1963 and West Germany is being forced to do today. Under the competitive rules of the Market, each State is of course free to find its way out of this situation as best it can. Mr. William Pickles in a recent broadcast said:

> "The French Economic Planning Commission has discovered that as the Community develops, national planning becomes less and less possible because the level of exports and imports cannot be forecast and because member countries tend to export their booms and slumps to each other at awkward moments. Free movement of capital—if and when it comes—will make the situation even worse."

So when you are told that entry to the Market will not ban genuine economic planning, do not believe it.

Joan Robinson's Essay

Mrs. Joan Robinson's *Essay on Marxian Economics* published in 1941 was the first attempt of a British economist seriously to study Marx. The essay pleased neither the Academics not Marxists but went through eight editions between 1941 and 1964. Now a revised edition (Macmillan, 16s.) has appeared in which the author continues to tease both sides:

> "The questions that he (Marx) posed are still relevant today, but the academics continue to erect elegant elaborations on trivial topics."

Incidentally Mrs. Robinson disputes the theory widely held by economists that the share of wages in manufacturing output has changed very little, profit and wages and salaries remaining in more or less the same proportion over the decades.

> "A very interesting enquiry published by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs, which has been very little publicised in academic quarters, shows that the share of wages in net output in manufacturing industry varies from 25 per cent in countries such as Nicaragua and Costa Rica to more than 50 per cent in Australia, the Scandinavian countries, the United Kingdom, and the United States, while in countries such as Italy and Japan it is around 40 per cent. These figures certainly suggest that the clue to relative shares is to be found in bargaining power rather than in the capital/labour ratio."

The "Essay" is still useful for Marxists to sharpen their critical teeth on.

Fifty Years After

All over the world people are this year commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

Starting in our next issue *Marxism Today* will publish a series of articles on various aspects of the Russian Revolution and its immense consequences.

Andrew Rothstein will write a first article on the February (March) 1917 Revolution and a second on the narrative of October. James Klugmann will treat the reaction of the British working class to the events of October 1917 and the early British struggles of solidarity with the young Soviet Republic. Other articles will discuss the Soviet achievements in fifty years of pioneering socialism, the effects of the Revolution on the national and colonial movement, and the International Significance of the October Revolution.

The literature on the Revolution is immense. We would remind our readers that John Reed's stirring *Ten Days that Shook the World*, which was first published in Britain by the Communist Party, and later printed by Lawrence & Wishart, is now available as a Penguin Book[1]. The period of 1917-1918 is

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[1] John Reed, *Ten Days that Shook the World*, Lawrence & Wishart (bound) 18s., and Penguin Books (paperback) 6s.

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covered in *Lenin's Collected Works*, Volumes 23-26[2], and just as we go to press we have received an English translation of the "History of the October Revolution" edited by Professor P. N. Sobolev (under the auspices of the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences[3]). It provides a detailed background of the period from early 1917 until the autumn of 1918. Chapter headings like—Overthrow of the Tsar—Dual Power—Lenin's April Theses—the First All Russian Conference of Workers and Soviet Deputies—Sixth Party Congress—Kornilov Revolt—Preparation for Armed Insurrection—Insurrection in Petrograd—War of Intervention begins—establishment of the Soviet State—evoke a panorama of these great events that shook and changed the world.

Syria Moves Left

Following the official delegations last year from the Governments of Iraq and the United Arab Republic to the Soviet Union, another went in January of this year from the Baathist Party[4] (now in power in Syria), to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This was an entirely new development, arising from the progressive changes which have taken place in Syria since February 1966, when the left-wing of the Baathist Party took over power from the old regime.

For the past ten years there has been sharp internal political struggle in Syria, with no less than 12 changes in the Cabinet. In 1957, Syria commenced a short-lived union with Egypt, and this union became known as the United Arab Republic—a title which Egypt has retained since Syria broke away from it.

Until 1962 the big bourgeois politicians held sway in Syria, waging a regime of terror against the progressive forces. The situation changed, however, in 1962, when a fairly progressive coalition government was formed, led by Khalid Azm. In March 1963 (a month after the reactionary military coup in neighbouring Iraq when Kassim was killed) there was a military coup in Syria, and the right-wing Baathists led by Salad el Din made him their Prime Minister. It was not long before Bitar himself was overthrown, and at the end of 1964 the left-wing Baathists took over with General Hafez as Prime Minister. Since the beginning of 1965 there have been a whole series of nationalisation measures, with more than 100 trading and industrial services taken over, including such large oil distributing concerns as Socony Vacuum, Esso and Standard Shell.

By the end of 1965 more than 80 per cent of Syria's industrial output was under state ownership. Compensation was fixed at the low rate of 3 per cent redeemable in 15 years; new trade agreements and economic relations were opened with the socialist countries; and a second Five-Year-Plan (1965-70) was put into operation. Soviet trade increased from S£1 million in 1955, to S£100 million in 1966.

In face of this the right-wing Baathists attempted to regain power in February 1966, but were completely defeated. The left-wing Baathists consolidated their position, this time with General Jadid as Head of State and Dr. Zayyan as Prime Minister. The new Cabinet included a Communist and many other progressive elements.[5]

The Dialogue Continues

The growing interest in the dialogue between Christianity and Marxism was confirmed by the attendance at the Discussion Conference on "Marxism and Religion" organised by the Marx Memorial Library at the end of February.

The Library meeting hall was full to overflowing when the Editor of *Marxism Today* gave the opening lecture,[6] and a considerable part of the audience came from different Christian denominations.

It was probably the first time that Protestant and Catholic Ministers, Catholic nuns and monks, and young Christians could be seen fraternally discussing with Marxists in the precincts of Marx House.

Discussion ranged round many issues. What was the background to the growing dialogue? Should it develop more around fundamental approaches or aim rather to find forms of immediate co-operation in opposition to war, racialism and poverty? What should Marxists ask of Christians, and Christians of Marxists, to make the dialogue fruitful?

There seemed to be common ground that we should not disguise our differences, but that there was a strong foundation for long term as well as

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[2] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vols. 23-26, Lawrence & Wishart, 12s. 6d. each.

[3] *The History of the October Revolution*, edited by P. N. Sobolev, Progress Publishers, Moscow, distributed by Central Books Ltd., 440 pp., 18s.

[4] "Baathism" is "Arab Socialist Awakening", but the Baathist Party is comprised of conflicting political elements ranging from those holding fascist ideas, to those with socialist ideas. The main socialist trend is towards "Arab Socialism", not towards the ideas of scientific socialism.

[5] The main highlights of the developments in Syria over the past decade have been summarised in a 12-page information statement entitled *The Situation in Syria* produced for the International Department of the Communist Party.

[6] Available from Librarian, Marx House, 37a Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.1. 2s. 6d.

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short term co-operation. That the dialogue was necessary, and should be continued and extended nationally and locally, all seemed agreed.

Victor Gollancz

Predictably, the obituaries of Victor Gollancz made, in the main, no more than cursory mention of the Left Book Club. It is, of course, true that in later years he himself turned away from that period of his life, became sharply critical of many aspects of Marxism, and increasingly came to concentrate upon humanitarian and pacifist works, revealing himself as a man continually haunted by the existence of suffering, and seeking an individual solution.

It may well be, however, that he will be best remembered by future historians of the Labour movement for the role that he played in the thirties.

On his feelings on reading of Hitler's victory in *The Times* in January 1933 he writes in his autobiography "before it had been a question of enlightening people, in a general sort of way, about the causes of war; now it was a question of preventing a war that was just around the corner. Sense of urgency gave way to maddened feverishness; no more than a split second, now, in which to pull up one's feet from the quagmire".

It was precisely that feverishness, and the spectre of fascism and war which haunted him, that drove him at an astonishing pace to use the resources of his young but already distinguished publishing house to launch the Left Book Club in 1936.

To those who have known only the proliferation of paper backs and the cheap editions of the sixties it is difficult to convey the excitement with which fifty or sixty thousand people enrolled with their booksellers to get for 2s. 6d. each month a Left Book Club choice selected by Victor Gollancz, John Strachey and Harold Laski. Soon there came "additional" books, educational books, LBC editions of the Marxist classics, great catalogues of titles circulated to every member accompanied by a free journal *Left News*, which contained editorials, articles, reviews, and later, news of the groups.

The publication of such books as John Strachey's *Theory and Practice of Socialism*, Leo Huberman's *Man's Worldly Goods*, R. Palme Dutt's *World Politics*, Hyman Levy's *Philosophy for a Modern Man* as well as such additional books as Emile Burns *Handbook of Marxism* together with scores of others all made a tremendous impact on thousands of people who would normally never have come into contact with works of this sort.

Certainly nobody had realised that what began as the production of cheap books "to assist in the terribly urgent struggle for world peace, and against fascism" would develop into a great national organisation, with thousands of members, hundreds of discussion groups, a programme of summer schools, theatre guilds, conferences, and great rallies in all the main centres. In London, for example, meetings were held which filled to overflowing the Albert Hall, the Queens Hall, and even the great Empress Hall, with a capacity of twenty-three thousand. The list of speakers itself is a reminder of the width of participation in this great forum of anti-fascist expression. Wilfred Roberts, Richard Acland, John Strachey, Ellen Wilkinson, Robert Boothby, Harry Pollitt, R. Palme Dutt, the Dean of Canterbury, and such visitors as Paul Robeson and Nehru.

Left Book Club

A superb organiser and propagandist, Gollancz was at the centre of all this activity. No detail was too routine to get his total attention. The size of the type on a leaflet, the exact "nuance" of a slogan, the ritual "Some Free Seats at the Door" on all the posters—all these were carefully studied, experiences analysed, lessons learned. Hundreds of letters coming into the office were carefully read, as were the replies sent by members of his staff. In this way his personal grip on the organisation was always present, and his complex, bustling, driving personality stamped itself on the Club.

The development of the Left Book Club would not, of course, have resulted from the work of one man, however forceful. The political urgency of the international situation and the need for a popular front against fascism meant that there was a desperate need for the kind of forum the Left Book Club provided.

It was a heady, crusading, enthusiastic atmosphere which generated new schemes at a tremendous pace. Millions of leaflets were produced. On the eve of Munich one leaflet was issued in more than two million copies and these were taken up virtually in hours by willing volunteers from all over the country. In all this activity Communists played a vigorous and sustained part.

In 1952 Gollancz wrote of this period "*within the limits of a non-pacifist view*, the Left Book Club or Popular Front tactic was the only possible one. If support had been strong enough it would probably have prevented the war; nothing else would have done so . . . and it very nearly *was* strong enough."

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The Greater London Council

John Mahon

POLLING day for the Greater London Council (GLC) is on April 13th, 1967, when some five million electors will be eligible to vote. The Communist party will contest in every borough, giving every elector the opportunity to vote Communist. The Labour, Tory and Liberal Parties will contest all of the 100 seats. The electoral divisions will be the 32 London Boroughs, returning four, three or two members according to size of electorate. Parliament has decided to postpone the election of the London Borough Councils (LBCs) till next year.

1964 and Today

The voting for the GLC is influenced by national political trends as well as by London issues and big changes have taken place in both since the 1964 election returned 64 Labour and 36 Tory members.

Then after 13 years of Tory rule, Labour was riding on a wave of discontent. Its GLC victory was followed by the narrow Parliamentary majority of 1964 and the decisive majority of 1966.

Today the Wilson Government, abandoning its election promises, operates a policy of wage freeze and restraint, anti-trade union legislation and financial measures, which benefit big business at the expense of the people. Right wing Labour is not merely continuing much of Tory policy, it is actively increasing state activities to further the interests of big business in many directions. In doing so it puts itself into conflict with the labour movement.

Three years ago London Labour was protesting at Tory limitations of the work of the LCC and promising a vigorous policy on the GLC. Today it has to meet widespread dissatisfaction at its three years of GLC rule. While office blocks tower up, housing crawls at a snail's pace. The scandal of thousands of homeless families continues. Nursery schools are left to private enterprise; numerous condemned or obsolete school buildings remain in use; comprehensive schools are denied the new buildings needed for their success. Priority is given at vast expense to major road developments of dubious efficacy entailing thousands of demolitions of good homes.

It is the intention of this article to develop the view that the 1963 London Government Act was a first move in the drastic reorganisation of local government with the purpose of subordinating its social service aspects to the drive of monopoly capital for more profits and more power. The first three years of the operation of the Act show that right wing Labour is carrying forward this drive at London as well as national level, and that the machinery and the resources of the GLC are in serious danger of being diverted from the solution of London's problems to becoming an adjunct of big business.

The issue at the April election is not only whether Labour or the Tories are to have the majority on the GLC, important though that is. The deeper issue is whether the GLC is to serve plutocracy or democracy, whether London is to be modernised in the interests of the motor-car and oil monopolies, moneylenders, big construction firms, land and property owners, or in the interests of the millions of ordinary people.

The 1963 Act

The Greater London Council and the 32 London Borough Councils were set up as the higher and lower tier authorities for Greater London by the 1963 London Government Act. They cover 620 square miles, almost the whole built-up area. All previous authorities were swept away except the Corporation of the City of London, which was integrated into the new structure with, approximately, the powers of a Borough Council.

Comparison with earlier legislation shows the qualitative change made by the 1963 Act.

The first single authority for London (that is, London outside the City) was the Metropolitan Board of Works set up in 1855. It was composed of representatives from 81 district authorities responsible for sanitation, street maintenance and slum clearance in 117 square miles of Middlesex, Kent and Surrey. It was responsible for services covering London as a whole, such as the Thames Embankment, flood prevention works, roads and bridges, parks and open spaces, and a main drainage system. These were the minimum needs for the accelerated growth of the metropolis as capitalism entered the phase of imperialist expansion.

In 1888 an Act raised London to the status of an Administrative County and the London County Council took over from the MBW with additional responsibilities. In 1889 an Act replaced the 41 Districts by 28 Metropolitan Boroughs. Throughout these changes the City Corporation remained.

London continued to spread in all directions. The resultant inadequacies of local government were the subject of several inquiries but not until

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1957, when London had grown to 720 square miles, was a Royal Commission set up whose work, with some important changes, became the basis of the 1963 Act under a Tory government.

Generally speaking, the authorities set up in 1855, 1888 and 1889 had powers limited to supplementing the developments initiated by private enterprise by municipal activity in social service fields of low or non-profitability.

The 1963 Act set up authorities with far greater resources and more extensive powers, the exercise of which is effectively controlled by the central government, authorities which could serve as effective instruments in carrying through the modernisation needed by big business and in doing so increase its profit and power. Having secured decisive influence in the state machine, big business needs a new type of local government machine to carry out its policy.

Three years' experience of the 1963 Act was no doubt a factor in the recent decision to halt the piecemeal reorganisation of local government in England and to appoint a Royal Commission to review the entire structure. Among the drastic changes proposed is the replacement of the present counties, boroughs and districts by some 20 or less regions, each centred on a suitable big town, with two-tier authorities. Regional boundaries would be drawn with regard to the needs of modern industry, commerce and communications. The allotment of powers by the 1963 Act and the use made of them are therefore of interest not only to Londoners.

GLC Powers

The powers of the GLC including its special committee, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA)[1] and the LBCs have to be taken together to see how the two-tier system works. For some services responsibility is shared, for others the GLC is solely responsible, yet others are the sole responsibility of the LBCs.

Where powers are shared, it is the GLC which has the decisive responsibility, the so-called "strategic direction" of what has to be done, the role of the LBCs being to apply the directions to their localities. The sole responsibility of the LBCs is mainly in the personal services requiring contact with the people, such as health, welfare, care of children and where Acts of Parliament require inspection of premises, weights and measures, safety, etc. The Tory intention was to include Education as a Borough responsibility. Popular protest resulted in the GLC through the ILEA being responsible for the education services in the 12 inner London Boroughs, thus preventing the break-up of the progressive education service built by the LCC. In outer London the Borough Councils are the Education Authorities.

The central government strictly controls the exercise of these powers, partly through the detailed technical approval required for most works, partly by financial approval including grants, and partly by the Parliamentary sanction through the annual Money Bill for capital expenditure. The borrowing powers of the GLC are closely regulated by the central government.

Behind its imposing façade, the GLC is in fact even more than its predecessors, an agency of the central government. It may choose its design for the Embankment lamp-posts, it cannot be independent in decisive spheres of London development.

Its independence is further limited by its financial difficulties. The expenditure required to meet modern costs, in works, land, materials and administration together with the high charges on debts, cannot be covered by income, the present scale of government grants and a tolerable level of rates. Large-scale borrowing on the money market is indispensable, and that requires the goodwill of the City financiers.

The GLC's powers may be considered from the angle of distinguishing those capable of being used to bring about new large-scale developments in the modernisation of London, as distinct from the traditional municipal, social and maintenance services, though many of these certainly require modernisation and extension.

"Development" Powers

The "development" powers are mainly contained in those for Planning, Roads, Traffic, control of Building, compulsory acquisition of sites and property, Research and Intelligence, and Scientific services.

The 1963 Act required the GLC to plan for London as a whole, and the Planning Regulations 1966 set out in detail the policies to be covered in the Greater London Development Plan (GLDP) to be presented to the Minister by December 31st, 1968. It has to cover the use of land, distribution of employment and population, restriction of offices, industry and commerce, major roads, public transport, traffic interchange, the green belt, shopping centres, high buildings and much else. To meet these formidable requirements the GLC will draw on the work of the London Transportation Study, the Land Use Survey, the Employment Survey and Housing Survey, all now being compiled.

Previous plans, the County of London 1943 and

[1] The ILEA is composed of the 40 GLC members for the 12 inner London Boroughs plus a representative of each of those Borough Councils and one from the City Corporation.

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Abercrombie 1944, because of the gap between their promise and the performance, have given rise to public scepticism when plans are mentioned. It would be a mistake to regard the plan now being prepared as only or largely a paper project. No doubt much of it will remain so, but powerful forces working for big and profitable changes in roads, transport, building and re-development will use the plan for their own purposes. The preliminary statement on the GLDP already circulated is a danger signal.

Finance

The GLC in its first three years has done an immense and varied amount of work. We propose to glance at three aspects only—finance, roads and housing.

The GLC is the richest authority in the country, Greater London having an annual rateable value of £600 million. A rate of 1d. in the £ therefore produces no less than £2½m., an attractive thought for investors. The GLC owns 240,000 dwellings let for rent, with an annual net rental of £23m. It employs over 84,000 people, including the ILEA staff of 45,816.

The Estimates for 1966-67 show that its expenditure on current account will total £245m., including £106m. for the ILEA. On capital account the expenditure is £157m., making a grand total of over £402m.

An authority operating on this scale is not only something new in local government, it opens new prospects for big works requiring high expenditure, and therefore of big profits for investors and contractors.

Private investment is effected through the borrowing method which is a main source of capital expenditure. There is a statutory limit of 30 per cent on the proportion of money required which can be raised from the Public Works Loans Board at an interest lower than on the money market. Most of the borrowing is therefore through stock or bills floated on the market.

All borrowings are pooled in a Consolidated Loans Fund from which the charges—interest, repayment and issue expenses—are met. A proportion of these charges is put to the account of every GLC service. For example, the 1966-67 Estimates include the following for debt charges: Housing £21.8m., Main Drainage £3.3m., Education £6.8m., Roads and Traffic £1.6m. No service can escape. As the Londoner pays for an ambulance, the teaching of children, or sweeping up a leaf in the parks, the moneylenders get their tribute. And the amount they get grows year by year.

The GLC, of course, had to take over the debts of its predecessors. Its total debt on March 31st, 1966, was £525.3m. on which the charges for the year were nearly £33m. As expenditure rises, so borrowing must increase. As interest rates rise, so does the cost of borrowing. Whatever else is frozen, debt charges go merrily on and up. The debt charges imposed on the services in 1966-67, for interest and redemption, totalled £37.8m., an increase of £4.9m. on the previous year.

By this system private capital ensures its profit from what is called public ownership and control. This system might be called state capitalism, it certainly has nothing in common with socialism.

Jesus in his simple way, finding the usurers plying their trade in the temple precincts, took a scourge and drove them out. He would need more than a scourge to drive them out of the County Hall today.

Who Profits?

The exploitation of the people of London by the debt system is perhaps best seen from specific examples. In 1966 the GLC raised a ten-year loan at 6¾ per cent interest. At the end of the 10 years interest and repayment will amount to £83¾m. London gets £50m. for which it repays £83¾m.

The average rent per week of GLC dwellings is 43s. 9d. Debt charges amount to 31s. 3d. per week. The rate contribution is 1s. 9d. per week. Tory hypocrisy complains that council tenants are heavily subsidised by ratepayers. The facts show that it is the moneylenders who are heavily subsidised, by tenant and ratepayer.

While interest on loans is the main source of private profit from the work of the GLC, it is not the only one. Large construction contracts are awarded to a limited number of big firms able to tender for them, and no doubt to profit handsomely. High and steadily increasing prices are paid for land and property acquired for development. Modernisation means a great extension of these sources of private profit.

The 1966-67 Estimates list 48 major road improvements, costing during the year £4m. on property and £9.5m. on works. Total cost approved for some such improvements passes £70m., including Euston Road £4.4m., Harrow Road flyover £5.4m., Vauxhall Cross £5.4m., Park Lane £5.7m., and Western Avenue Extension £26.6m. Blackwall Tunnel improvement is to cost over £8m., and its southern approach another £9.6m.

Yet there are still condemned school buildings in use in the ILEA area.

The 1959 Town and Country Planning Act compels councils to pay for land at current market prices. But the market price depends on supply and demand. So the more land the councils need to buy, the higher goes the price. Allocating £20m. for land purchase in 1967-68 the GLC Housing Committee state that the cost of land has risen from an

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average of under £30,000 an acre in 1962 to almost £80,000 an acre in 1966.

How strange that this vast increase has escaped the eagle eye of the Prices and Incomes Board!

There was always an element of private profit in the activity of the local authorities, now it is on way to becoming dominant.

Roads

The most ambitious—and expensive—modernisation scheme the GLC has so far produced is the "motor-way box" to encircle, or enrectangle, inner London. It is the innermost of three orbital ring roads, the next outward being the north and south circular route, the "C" ring, the outermost, on the skirts of the built-up area, the "D" ring. Within the box will live 1½ million people, within the "C" ring 4 million.

These plans are based on the arguments that, by 1980, the increased standard of living will mean 2 million cars in London, double the present number; that commuter traffic will be carried by improved rail and bus services; that the main traffic problem will be cars and lorries outside the centre and across the suburbs, for all purposes except commuting; that to serve this traffic the roads must pass through or very near the main centres of population.

The box road will be some 37 miles in total length, with eight lanes of traffic. There will be no frontage, intersections, standing vehicles, learner-drivers or pedestrians. Goods traffic will be heavy. Express buses are possible. The road will be part on ground level, part elevated, part in cuttings or underground. The aim is to enable through traffic to avoid the centre, and provide rapid cross routes for outer borough traffic.

The four sides of the box will be, roughly—*North*, Willesden to Hackney Wick, through Brent, Camden, Islington, Hackney; *East*, Hackney via Blackwall Tunnel to Kidbrooke, through Tower Hamlets, Greenwich; *South*, from Kidbrooke to Clapham Junction and the river, through Greenwich, Lewisham, Southwark, Lambeth, Wandsworth; *West*, from Chelsea Basin to Willesden through Kensington and Brent.

The North "C" road will run from Chiswick through Hounslow, Ealing, Brent, Barnet, Haringey, Waltham Forest and Redbridge to Ilford. The South "C" road, from Clapham Junction to Kidbrooke through Wandsworth, Lambeth, Croydon, Bromley, Lewisham and Greenwich. The "C" roads will have six lanes of traffic.

The new roads and their approaches, especially the box, will involve demolition of thousands of buildings, mainly residential. No official statement is available of the number, the cost of compensation, or the arrangements for alternative accommodation. The local press in Camden says 7,000 people will have to be rehoused there. South London demolitions will be particularly extensive since it will have the south cross of the motor box and the almost entirely new South "C" road.

The cost will be phenomenal. For the 20 miles of the north side of the box £250m. has been stated. The total will probably pass the £1,000m. Even if the Ministry of Transport pays three-quarters, London will have a tremendous bill to meet, plus the cost of rehousing.

Slow-Motion Housing

The haste and the ambition shown in the road plan is in startling contrast to the slow motion on housing, where there is no sign of any serious plan to end the shortage.

The Milner-Holland report of 1965 gave the essentials of Greater London's housing problem and indicated the scope of measures to end it. It revealed that there were 200,000 more families than homes, with 400,000 families in sub-standard dwellings. This acute shortage and the infamous Rent Acts of the Tory government made possible exorbitant rents and prices of houses, a wave of evictions, permanent occupation of slums, basements, rat-infested or damp properties, and Rachmanism.

The report had some penetrating things to say on what should be done.

> "The only complete and lasting remedy, both for abuses and insecurity of tenure, is the production of sufficient, well managed and adequate housing, at appropriate rents and in the right places."

These words could well be engraved in large characters on the walls of the GLC's council chamber.

The report continued: "private landlords cannot provide homes except at rents far beyond the reach of thousands of families" and "if the attack on shortage and bad housing conditions is to be successful, it must be planned, applied and directed, for London as a whole".

The London District Committee of the Communist Party, in a public statement, pointed out that to end the shortage in the way proposed would require council building at the rate of 100,000 dwellings a year for at least ten years. Only this scale would provide every family with a home of their own, replace sub-standard buildings, provide for 20,000 newly formed families each year, allow for demolitions, and make provision for migrants entering London. Unless building reaches this level, the shortage will worsen, as large numbers of obsolescent houses are rapidly deteriorating and demolitions due to modernisation are increasing.

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Such a rate of building is technically possible with modern industrial methods. The GLC Director of Housing has described how it is being done in Moscow. His report on the visit of the GLC delegation says "The city is producing houses at the rate of roughly 100,000 a year". In 1965 it produced 90,000 and in 1966 "hopes to produce 115,000". "During the period between now and 1980 the aim is to produce 1½m. dwellings and there is every indication that the City of Moscow will be successful in achieving this figure." "They are determined to hit their target of a warm weather-tight dwelling with all essentials for every family by 1980."

If Moscow can do it, why not London? Surely our professional and technical skill is equal to theirs? Is it obstruction by vested interests that holds things up? Then why does the GLC not say so and call on the Government to act?

If men, money and machines can be found for the mammoth road job, sites and property acquired, why not for a planned drive to end the housing shortage?

So far, neither the GLC nor the Government have shown any sign of political determination to solve the housing problem. One could hardly expect the Tories to do so; they make fortunes out of the shortage.

Promises and Practice

Mr. Mellish, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Housing, has special responsibilities for London. Following the Government statement of intent to improve the position revealed by Milner-Holland, he spoke at a press conference of providing a home for every family in ten years, requiring 50,000 new homes a year. This was already a retreat since it left the sub-standard dwellings problem untouched. He then stepped down from 50,000 to 35,000 a year to be built by GLC and LBCs. Nor did he point out that, even if this were achieved, for ten years there would still be a shortage of 150,000 homes.

At another press conference, held by Mr. Mellish in January 1967, it was stated that the GLC expected a demand for 96,500 homes in the next five years, and estimated that it could provide 96,000 including those outside London. No one explained how the demand for 96,500 could be squared with the GLC's own published statement of over 150,000 on the waiting lists.

So Mr. Mellish's necessity to build 50,000 homes a year, and his call to build 35,000 has dwindled to an "estimated" supply of less than 20,000 a year.

In fact the GLC and LBCs in 1965 built 17,944 new homes. Other GLC figures show that tenders approved in 1964 were for 21,500 new homes, in 1965 for 26,895 and in 1966 for 32,799. In 1966 the GLC actually started 6,325 new homes; bought 981 from private enterprise; had ready for letting, new or modernised, 5,847 dwellings. Of the 10,450 families it rehoused, 6,400 were from slum clearance or development demolition.

Few people will accept Mr. Mellish's view that these figures are "a major breakthrough". The indefiniteness of the figures, the silence on any ten-year aim, the vague statement that the government "envisage" housing "about a million" people in 15 years, all give the impression that there is no real plan to end London's housing scandal.

For Profit not People

The creation of the GLC and its extensive administrative machine together with the return of a decisive Labour majority afforded an opportunity for a big advance in the social services and the planning of London's future.

Instead of seizing this opportunity the GLC Labour leadership has given priority to developments which afford huge profits to private investors, big contractors and landowners. There are no plans on a comparable scale for housing and education.

The GLC Labour leadership is increasingly indifferent to the Conference decisions and the traditional aims of the London Labour movement. It does insufficient to inform or consult the democratic organisations and public opinion before taking major decisions. This increases the danger of bureaucracy and remoteness and consequent loss of public interest and support.

Instead of pressure on the Labour Government for departmental measures and legislation to help the GLC to solve London's problems, the GLC Labour leadership tends to accept in silence the policy laid down from Whitehall.

To sum up. Under right-wing leadership Labour in power at County Hall and Labour in power at Whitehall, instead of co-operating to meet the people's needs, are collaborating with big business to increase its profits and power.

That is the result of right-wing policy. In the interests of the working people and the future of the Labour movement, a change of policy is urgently needed.

Undemocratic Elections

In the 1964 election the Communist candidates put forward a policy on the theme of "London for the Millions not for the Millionaires" and obtained 92,323 votes. The Communist vote was won in spite of the fact that the BBC refused any broadcasting time at all to the Communist Party during the campaign, though it allowed the parties with national political broadcasts to use them to support their GLC campaign.

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Under any system of proportional representation there would have been four Communist councillors. Without PR the present exceptionally large electoral divisions merely exaggerate in terms of seats the voting majority of one of the two largest parties. With 1,095,351 votes Labour got 64 seats; with 976,276 votes the Tories got 36 seats. With 225,575 votes the Liberals got no seats at all. The lack of PR did not merely deprive the Communist voters of representation, it deprived the GLC itself of hearing any real alternative to the pro-big-business policy of the right-wing Labour and Tory leaders.

The intention of the 1963 Act is that, when the Boundaries Commission has regulated the London Parliamentary Constituencies, reducing them to 100 in number all within the Greater London boundary, the GLC electoral division will consist of each parliamentary constituency returning one member. This would give the Tories more seats than at present but would do nothing to break through the Labour-Tory monopoly and the practical disenfranchisement of all other voters.

Communist Policy

The 1964 Communist vote clearly expressed a trend in the Labour movement for an alternative policy to that of the right-wing leaders.

The 1967 Communist candidates will continue this fight. Six issues have been selected for the election platform—Planning, Housing, Education, Passenger Transport, Finance, and Democracy. All these express the general demand that London modernisation should be planned to benefit the people and not the profiteers.

The Communists propose an all-round development plan, with priority for the most urgent needs of the people—a home for every family, comprehensive education for every child, adequate and cheaper passenger transport, and enough hospitals, health and welfare centres, open spaces, and facilities for art, culture, sport and recreation. Roads and facilities for the motor-car would find their place in such a plan; they would not be given priority over homes and schools.

In Housing the Communists want a ten-year plan to build, using industrialised building methods, a million new homes, to be let at rents within the people's ability to pay. The GLC should set up publicly-owned enterprises to produce the materials and components needed, and to provide modern large-scale construction equipment. The necessary sites would be acquired for the large-scale reconstruction of whole areas of obsolete or obsolescent houses, the reconstruction to include schools and other buildings and facilities.

In Education the Communists want to see emergency measures taken with more determination to provide enough trained teachers, and enough modern buildings for more nursery schools, primary school classes of not more than 30, comprehensive schools for all without selection. The scandal of schools without indoor lavatories and washing facilities, of obsolete and condemned buildings, and of comprehensive schools split between several buildings should be ended.

The Communist proposal for passenger transport is that the present services of London Transport, relieved of debt charges and fuel tax, should be transferred to the ownership and control of the GLC, which should also have powers to co-ordinate all forms of public transport, and run them as a social service to provide the services the people need at lower fares than the present.

Road improvements should be included in the modernisation plan but in every scheme involving demolitions of homes should be included the construction of more new homes than are demolished so that a contribution is made to the housing problem. Where the schemes are large enough, other socially necessary buildings should be included too.

To ease the ratepayers' burden requires Government action. New loans to the GLC should be supplied by the Government at not more than 2 per cent interest, and GLC liabilities on existing loans also reduced to 2 per cent. A larger share of the costs of housing, education and major road development should be met by the Government. The present unfair rating system bears most heavily on the lowest paid. It should be replaced by a local income tax including commercial and industrial profits.

The Government should nationalise urban land, except that of owner-occupiers; and make available to the GLC the land needed for housing, schools and hospitals.

Democracy

The GLC should give the people more say in the solution of London problems by consulting them prior to making major decisions. Tenants' committees on GLC estates, parents' committees in the schools and forms of practical consultation should be developed in all services.

At present Londoners pay for the Metropolitan Police but have no say at all in their control. This is a violation of democratic practice, and the GLC should have powers at least equivalent to those of Watch Committees in provincial towns.

This immediate policy would reverse the present course of the GLC by putting the people's needs before the profits of the vested interests.

It makes clear the essential unity of policy needed as between the GLC and the Government. It is ridiculous as well as dishonest that Labour in power at the County Hall should excuse or seek to

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conceal its frustration by Labour in power in Whitehall.

This policy is a broad progressive platform, carrying forward the traditional demands of the Labour movement on social issues. The multiple vote gives all left Labour voters the opportunity to support it, by giving one of their votes to the Communist and the others to the most progressive of the Labour candidates. Thus the Labour majority can be maintained, and strengthened by the election of Communist councillors.

For the GLC to serve the people a Labour majority is not enough; a change of policy is needed, as it is in Labour's policy nationally.

The Negro Freedom Movement in the United States

John Williamson

THE entire world knows of the Negro Freedom Movement in the United States, which, in its present form, dates roughly from the 1954 US Supreme Court decision abolishing school segregation. It is sufficient to name a few of the places associated with the epoch-making mass struggles—with their martyred dead—to remind the reader of the scope of this movement that has swept America; Montgomery and the bus boycott, Little Rock and school integration; Birmingham and the bombing of churches and killing of children; the fight of Meredith backed by US troops to enter the Mississippi state university; the events and march at Selma; the numerous Freedom Rides; the murder in Mississippi of three young civil rights workers (two white and one Negro); the recent so-called Meredith March in Mississippi and his attempted assassination and the great Freedom March in Washington with its 250,000 Negro and white participants.

Add to that the place names of Negro ghettoes in the North where poverty combined with every aspect of discrimination and police provocation results in outbursts of frustration and desperation—Harlem, Watts, Chicago South Side and Cleveland East Side.

The Movement Grows

During these last 13 years the Negro Freedom Movement has been the most articulate mass movement in America. For the first time since the Reconstruction Days, the great majority of the Negro people in the deep South have participated in the struggle for Freedom. The scope and character of the struggles, articulating the deeply felt grievances of *every* Negro, resulted in an unprecedented all-Negro unity nationally. This brought into the struggles, in one or another place, virtually every well-known Negro personality.

From the North, young people—Negro and white—came South to join in the planned activities —like Freedom Rides, electoral registration campaigns, Freedom Marches, etc. As the Movement gained momentum in the South, the masses of the Negro people reflected a feeling of confidence that change was in the air, reflected a feeling of "we won't stand this oppression any more and there is something we can do about it".

Some Concessions Compelled

The consequences of these 13 years of militant struggle have compelled the ruling class to yield big concessions. A series of legislative, judicial and executive actions have outlawed restrictive covenants, ordered integration of schools, universities, transportation, amusements and parks, restaurants, etc., guaranteed the right to vote and the outlawing of obstacles, the right to employment and various economic gains and other items covered in two major national Civil Rights Bills adopted by Congress in 1964 and 1965 and supplemented by local and state legislative bodies.

Electorally, gains were also made, although still very inadequate. The first Negro was elected to the US Senate in 1966 from Massachusetts together with the previous six Congressmen from four other states. Some 157 were elected to State Legislatures of whom 31 were State Senators. But these covered only 27 out of 50 states and in 7 of these there was only token representation of one Negro.

It has also resulted in compelling the Government to make the first appointment of Negroes to posts at Cabinet and Ambassadorial rank.

Important as these gains are, which militant struggle has forced the ruling class to yield, they are —compared with what white Americans enjoy—

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still very far from equal. The Negro in the United States still remains the most politically disqualified, the most jobless and underemployed economically, the most depressed socially, ill housed and worst educated, and their dignity as human beings is constantly violated by anti-Negro slurs and the filth of white superiority.

At the moment this is being written (mid-February) even President Johnson in a new message to Congress points out that the death rate among Negro children is 40 per cent above whites and that in schooling, earnings, housing and jury service, the position of the Negro is inferior to that of the whites.

Where Next?

As the Negro Freedom Movement "takes a breather" there is sweeping through it a great ferment of discussion, that also finds expression in the general labour and political movement, around the question "Where do we go from here?" and "Have the aims and strategy of the Negro Freedom Movement proved adequate or must they be revised?"

Various and conflicting views are expressed and if left only to its leaders, the all-Negro character of the fight that has proved so essential, could be jeopardised.

There are many who say the Negro Freedom Movement is at "the turning point in the road". Wilkins of the old established NAACP and Young of the Urban League, always fearful of struggle, look with horror at any new way forward, and want to continue in a partnership with the Johnson Administration and define their aims as solely to remove racial barriers and achieve integration while violently rejecting any concept of united Negro political or economic action.

Mr. John O. Killens, well-known novelist whose books include *Youngblood*, thinks the Civil Rights Movement "has reached a dead end" and that "it is time for a fundamental change of tactics". He explains that "integration comes after liberation . . . a slave cannot integrate with his master" and says "the main highway to black liberation is through a total unification . . . of black strength".

Another writer, Mrs. Anita Cornwall, thinks "what we need is a complete revaluation of the aims and methods of our civil rights organisations" and "we should stop pointing to the token gains made by the few among us and turn our full attention to the plight of the depressed and relentlessly oppressed many".

Harry Bridges, Left-Wing Pacific Coast Dockers' Union leader, adds his thinking, saying "most Negro leaders are convinced that the 1966 Civil Rights Bill is dead as far as any meaningful action to help the Negro people". While favouring the fight for integration he declares such activities "do not change the basic economic and political system that forces Negroes into ghettoes, or discriminates against them on jobs or in schools, that denies them legal rights, or robs and cheats them and beats them".

Gus Hall, General Secretary of the Communist Party (CPUSA) at its recent Congress also dealt with this question. He declared, the Negro Freedom Movement "has now entered upon a new stage . . . a more basic . . . stage of struggle". He went on to explain that the struggle "is now confronting some of the roots of the system of discrimination and segregation itself", as it moves decisively into "the realm of economic and political equality".

James Jackson, well-known Negro leader of the CPUSA, writes that "The widespread discussion which has developed . . . is part of a seeking for sound theory to illuminate the pathway of progress for the Negro Freedom Movement".

Thrown into the cauldron of discussion is the proposal to substitute the slogan of "Black Power" for all other objectives and slogans of the movement. This has sharply divided the Freedom Movement and it will be dealt with later in this article.

Before considering the various alternatives that are being advanced, these can be better understood, if certain facts of the last 13 years' struggle are recalled.

What were the basic causes that brought the development of the Negro Freedom Movement and its nationwide activities precisely during these last two decades? Certainly there were activities and struggles in the past—South and North—but primarily in the latter.

Migration from the South

Starting in the post-World War One years, migration from the land to the cities, and especially migration to the North, assumed big proportions. While in 1900, only 10 per cent of the Negro population lived outside the 11 Southern States, by 1964 it had reached 51 per cent or more. And in the South itself while only 7 per cent of the Negroes there in 1910 lived in cities, by 1960 this had reached 41 per cent. The Negro question was no longer primarily one of their relation to the land.

Side by side were two other developments: (1) a change in the character of the economy of the South with an influx of industry and (2) the impact of the returned Negro soldier from World War Two, the Korean war and from occupation duties at America's hundreds of posts throughout the world.

The feeling of strength and unity that came with urbanisation, whether North or South; the involvement in industrial struggles and strikes and experiences in the trade union movement, especially in the North; and the experiences—as well as

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Migration from the South (11 States)

1900-1910	..	207,000
1910-1920	..	487,600
1920-1930	..	800,000
1930-1940	..	400,000
1940-1950	..	1,613,000
1950-1960	..	1,431,000

Negro Population in some non-Southern cities

City	1910 %	1950 %	1960 %
New York	1.9	10	14
Chicago	2	14	23
Los Angeles	2.4	9	14
Philadelphia	5.5	18	26
Detroit	1.2	16	29
Cleveland	1.5	16	29
St. Louis	6.4	18	29
Washington DC	30	35	54

Sharecroppers in the South

1930	..	776,000
1940	..	548,000
1959	..	122,000

knowledge of the national liberation movement—gathered by the Negro soldier abroad, all combined to create *en masse* a Negro people that felt strength and were determined to assert themselves.

Effects of Independence Struggles

Outside the United States, the winning of political independence in country after country in the former colonial world—and especially in Africa—had an important impact on many, especially the young people. There came to the United States, either as diplomats, on government missions or as representatives to the UN, hundreds of non-white spokesmen of these new nations.

They immediately became victims of America's foul racialism—whether in law or prejudice. They fought back and the Government had to intervene to protect them, or else US imperialism saw endangered its efforts to establish its neo-colonial influence in these new nations. Only a few months ago, the *Daily Telegraph* indicated the stupidity that abounds in Washington DC today, when its correspondent there reported that "in the annual statistics of enrolment by race, Negro children of African parents, most of them diplomats assigned to Washington, are classified as 'White' ".

While the Negro in the United States thinks of himself exclusively as an American, the great sweep forward of the national liberation movement throughout the world, created a feeling of brotherhood based on colour. As the previously quoted novelist, John O. Killens, puts it, "our struggle for liberation is a part of the great Revolution sweeping the entire world, a Revolution against all the Great White Fathers in every nook and corner of this earth".

The existence and policies of the Socialist world in general had an indirect influence on a few, while the complete absence of racialism and the existence of complete integration in nearby socialist Cuba, made an impact on many more.

The Early 1950s

A combination of all these factors brought things to an explosive point in the early '50s. A combination of the rising militancy for Negro Freedom at home combined with great concern by the US ruling class about its image abroad as the leader of the "free world", resulted in the initial US Supreme Court decision in 1954 favouring school integration. The late President John Kennedy, with a vision that comprehended the need for change on many fronts, in order to try and preserve US imperialism, then championed the overall legislative struggles already described.

The Negro people, in an all-Negro national unity of millions, supported by ever larger sectors of progressive whites, quickly found strength and determination to say NO or NO MORE to things they had been forced to submit to all their lives.

As the Negro Freedom Movement arose, with the Deep South as its initial point of struggle, new organisations evolved, new leaders arose and new forms of struggle developed. The old established organisations—the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), organised by Dr. Du Bois in 1909, and the National Urban League, organised in 1910—were both conservative in outlook, led by Negro middle-class intellectuals in alliance with white liberals, who financed the organisations, and veered away from all mass struggles. The NAACP primarily concerned itself with the legal and legislative fight for Negro rights, while the NUL's aim was to find jobs for Negroes, originally helping to find jobs for the Negro migrant from the South.

New Organisations

Three things were settled by the Negroes in the South. Firstly, that the old established Northern-based organisations with their fear of mass struggle and remoteness from the heart of the Southland would not fill the bill. There arose three new organisations—the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the Southern Christian Leadership Con-

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ference (SCLC) led by Rev. Martin Luther King, and the Students' Non-Violent Co-ordinating Committee (SNICK or SNCC).

Secondly, that although the struggle should be national, its base must remain in the South. Thirdly, after a great debate, it was decided that only mass struggle, although designated as non-violent mass struggle, could bring success.

With the sweep of solidarity that characterised this militant Freedom Movement, the members of the NAACP (400,000) compelled their leaders to participate and fear of isolation brought lip-service support from the Urban League (which is not a membership organisation), but these bodies were never happy or comfortable in their new surroundings.

While all sections of the Negro people were involved, the articulate forces of leadership in the South and in the newly established organisations were primarily churchmen and students. Rev. King was responsible for the stamp of "non-violence" on the movement, but he has correctly understood this as in no way limiting mass struggle or the need of self defence when attacked. The members and bodies of CORE and SNCC have progressively become more militant.

Problems of Approach

As the overall struggle developed, with its understandable ups and downs, a few big problems have confronted it around which considerable differences, debate and struggle have taken place. After settling the initial problems of organisation, leadership, base of operations and character of the struggle, a key question was whether the Negro Freedom Movement should limit itself exclusively to the issue of Negro rights to the exclusion of the economic plight of the Negro people, especially jobs, the ignoring of the war in Vietnam and of the political and electoral struggles.

At first the overwhelming majority of leaders and supporters were in favour of this limited and restricted approach. It took time and experience for more and more to see that the battle for Negro rights cannot be isolated and separated from other burning social-political issues.

The first break-through came in 1963 at the time of the great Freedom Now March in Washington. The March was called to put "an end to the twin evils of racialism and economic degradation". The question of "jobs" became a central one and in the final statement on "Why We March" the call was made "for speedy action on two fronts—civil rights and jobs". The lesson was not yet drawn of united action with the trade unions, who were seen only in the person and policies of the reactionary and racialist craft leaders, like Meany.

When the 1964 elections came and there existed the threat of the pro-fascist Goldwater, in alliance with the hated Southern Dixicrat Democrats, being elected, the Negro people voted 98 per cent against Goldwater, which, in the circumstances of the old two-party system, meant supporting the Democrat Johnson. In many areas, like Detroit, local alliances of the Negro Freedom Movement and the trade unions were established.

Attitude to Vietnam War

Probably the sharpest issue to be resolved was an attitude to the Vietnam War. For a long time the leadership of CORE as well as Rev. King, argued that, while they individually were against America's war in Vietnam, it would compromise and weaken the struggles of the Negro Freedom Movement if they adopted a critical stand.

The first to break from this stand was the SNCC who declared sharply against the war, and, as a result, had one of its leaders Julian Bond, twice refused his seat in the Georgia State Senate to which he had been first elected in 1964. Today the leaders of the new mass organisations—SCLC, CORE and SNCC—are all on record against America's war in Vietnam.

As the issue of poverty—"the plight of two-fifths of a nation" as it is called—became a focal point of political struggle, a growing section of the Negro Freedom Movement, and especially the Rev. King, recognised this as a necessary aspect of the struggle. To exercise the equal rights being fought for, necessitates the economic status that this requires, whether it be jobs, houses, equal wages, skilled work or, above all, a minimum economic well being. All these questions opened the door to the fight against poverty and slums—but also necessitated an attitude to the trade unions.

Negro Movement and Trade Unions

The weak link of the Negro Freedom Movement nationally is the absence of the organised trade union movement. The AFL-CIO Executive Council majority, led by Meany, has resisted every step forward in the Negro's struggle for jobs, upgrading to skilled labour, apprenticeship, abolition of colour bar in the unions and representation in leadership at all levels. There are a number of notable exceptions as far as union participation in the outstanding struggle like the Selma and Washington marches, general public support, establishment of equal pay for equal work and the wiping out of all colour bars. These include the motor car workers, Pacific coast dockers, meat packing, shop assistants, electrical manufacturing, metal miners, etc.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council majority even refused to endorse the Washington Freedom Now

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March on the grounds that it feared violence. When the one Negro Vice-President of the AFL-CIO, A. Philip Randolph characterised the Council's action as "a masterpiece of non-committed non-commitment", Meany angrily asked him "Who the hell appointed you the champion of the Negro worker?" On that occasion, Walter Reuther felt called on to oppose Meany and said the Council's action was "so anaemic that you'd have to give it a blood transfusion to keep it alive on the way to the duplicating machine".

Social Composition

It is important to remember the social composition of the Negro people. While oppression and discrimination hit all Negroes, workers are the overwhelming majority. A breakdown of social composition shows: workers 85 per cent, farmers or farm workers 8 per cent, middle class and professional 6 per cent, and small capitalists 1 per cent. Though only one-tenth of the nation's population, Negroes supply one-fourth of the industrial force.

According to the 1960 Conference on Economic Progress report, 60 per cent of the Negro families were in the poverty brackets compared with 28.5 per cent of white families. Unemployment in 1964 among whites was 4.6 per cent but for Negroes 9.8 per cent and for Negro teenagers it was 26.2 per cent compared with 13.3 per cent for white teenagers. The relation of income for Negro men in 1964 was 59 per cent of that of white men. If it was taken for men *and* women the gap would be much wider.

Economic Discrimination

There is an economic basis for racial discrimination. There still remain wage differentials in some industries between North and South and until recently this was generally prevalent. Then, in the South itself, there are wage differentials between Negroes and whites doing the same work. In the North, where the unions in the mass production industries have established equal pay for equal work, there are recognised areas in factories, like the foundries in the motor-car industry, which are termed "Negro jobs". No need to say they are the heaviest, hardest and dirtiest jobs.

The following statistics will show the contrast between the South and nationally in regard to 1964 hourly wages of production workers; national $2.43 compared with the South $1.83. And more specifically Michigan $3.07 compared to Mississippi $1.75.

The well-known economist Victor Perlo says that in 1962 the super profits due to racial discrimination amounted to $14,000 million and added one-sixth to the income of Big Business.

The determined and bitter resistance to the abolition of discrimination by Big Business is not merely prejudice but hard economics.

While the overwhelming majority of American Negroes are workers, only 1,200,000 belong to the trade unions. The bulk of these belong to the former CIO industrial unions like motor car, steel, maritime and meat packing plus the teamsters and service trades. In these unions they play an active role. However, even among some of these, like the UAW, there are no Negroes on the General Executive Board or among the six national officers. Only six AFL-CIO national unions—packing, restaurant, seamen, dockers, building service and sleeping car porters—have some Negro national officers.

The relationship of the Negro Freedom Movement to the workers and the Labour Movement is a key one that has still to be resolved.

Freedom Movement and Labour Movement

Returning to the question of the lessons the Negro Freedom Movement has learned about the impossibility of separating the struggle for Negro rights from other burning social issues, the Rev. King addressed a mass meeting of 14,000 in Chicago, sponsored jointly with some trade unions and declared:

> "The slum is little more than a domestic colony which leaves its inhabitants dominated politically, exploited economically, segregated and humiliated, at every turn."

Even more important was a glimmering of a recognition on King's part of the need for an alliance between the Negro Freedom Movement and the trade unions. He met 75 Chicago trade union leaders as well as separately speaking to 200 shop stewards of the Packing House Workers Union (from the depths of *The Jungle*, famous novel by Upton Sinclair).

King emphasised the "mutual interests and concern" of the two movements and recalled the mass struggles of the workers in steel, motor car, packing, rubber and others in the '30s to establish their unions, saying "it was no accident that many of the techniques and methods" of the Negro Freedom Movement have already been "tested and tried by the labour movement".

Important as this experience in Chicago was, the failure to extend and develop it nationally remains one of the major issues that still needs resolving as far as the Negro Freedom Movement is concerned. Clearly, the antagonistic attitude of the reactionary core of AFL-CIO leadership and the hesitancy of other sections of the union movement to strike out boldly, serves as a major obstacle in the path of this necessary alliance.

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"Black Power"?

As was stated earlier, into the cauldron of intensive discussions in the Negro Freedom Movement as to how best to go forward, has been thrown the controversial slogan of Black Power.

As first projected by SNCC leader Stokely Carmichael, it tended to have a derisive anti-white note in it, although he denied he was against unity of Negroes and whites in the common struggle. His emphasis was that "we must organise black community power . . . to control our lives . . . to reclaim our history and our identity".

The CORE leader, Floyd McKessick, has projected a clearer argumentation saying that the Negro people "must have the self-determination to determine the direction" in which they are going and that the ingredients of Black Power involve "The growth of Negro political power; the building of Negro economic power; the improvement of the Negro self-image; the development of Negro leadership; the encouragement of federal law enforcement; and the mobilisation of Negro consumer power".

NAACP leader Roy Wilkins says "Black Power" means "Black Death" and "we will have none of it". However, the last NAACP Conference, by a two to one vote of delegates, rejected a paragraph in the leadership's resolution which referred to "unsalutary experiences of the NAACP with civil rights groups whose actions of declarations appear to be at cross purposes with ours".

Leading the fight against this resolution, Louisiana State Assemblyman Hawkins said let's "call it block power—the power of little people" and then told Wilkins "the NAACP has concentrated its efforts in Washington . . . but little effort has been directed on the economic problems that affect us in our daily lives".

The Rev. King, while considering the phrase "Black Power" "unfortunate because it gives wrong impressions", says it is not enough to condemn it, because millions of Negroes are frustrated and angered, because "extravagant promises made less than a year ago are a shattered mockery today". He calls for consultation between all the organisations and their leaders, emphasising "we are not far apart, even in terms of methods".

The great majority of the young people support Black Power—not always with the greatest of clarity. Again, the novelist John Kellens articulates the thoughts of many when he says, concerning some of the Negro middle class, "the struggle is over" as far as they are concerned. They "seem to think that what they ate made the black masses fat, and that when they prospered, the black masses prospered". But all that has happened is that "the white establishment" had enough "affluence" and "sagacity" to "let them sit at the foot of the table" and we must admit the "leavings" were quite substantial.

Basically "Black Power" reflects a determination on the part of the Negro Freedom Movement to build the maximum strength, political and economic, to realise its goal of equality on all fronts. Because it recognises that after 13 years of militant struggle involving unprecedented numbers—which followed 100 years of waiting—every forward step is resisted and progress is slow.

Without the benefit of Marxist analysis or understanding and limiting themselves to pragmatic conclusions, they are groping for a more fundamental solution to achieve the goals of Negro Freedom in America.

Marxist View

While the Negro Freedom Movement has just evolved this concept, still meaning different things to different people, already in 1959 the resolution of the 17th Convention of the CPUSA projected in clear cut language the same concept without use of the actual phrase. It said:

> "Negro people in the US must secure their rightful share of governmental power. In those urban and rural communities where they are the larger part of the population generally and in the Deep South area of the historic American cradle-land of the Negro people particularly, they must constitute the *majority* power in government.
>
> "In its essence, therefore, the struggle for Negro rights is not just a mere 'civil rights' fight, it is a *political* struggle; a struggle for a just share of representation nationally; a struggle for *majority rule in the localities where they are the dominant people in the population*; a struggle for genuinely representative government in the Southern States in particular and in the country as a whole."

Some forces in the Negro Freedom Movement attribute to "Black Power" magic powers it does not and cannot possess. They continue to think of the struggles of the Negro people in isolation. They project the false ideas that the Negro people can realise political power nationally by going it alone; can win jobs and upgrading within industry by bargaining their power separately to the employer irrespective of the white workers and the trade unions; should organise their own separate Negro political party. Even SNCC leader Carmichael said at one point "If we are to proceed towards true liberation, we must cut ourselves off from white people" and that "he had never known a white person he could trust".

While understanding the frustrations of such well-intentioned people with the progress of the struggle and the deep and bitter roots of white chauvinism, this desperation arises basically from a failure to understand the class basis of the power structure—

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in the economy and in running the State. All this is accentuated by the reactionary class collaboration of leaders like George Meany of the top council of the AFL-CIO, who have not even been an active ally, far less playing a leading role in the fight for Negro freedom.

While fully supporting the idea of Black Power politically in areas of Negro majority it has to be recognised that in most areas, the Negro people are a minority. The fight for all aspects of Negro rights and aims is no less important in these areas, especially in the ghettoes of the big northern and Western cities. This brings to the forefront the indispensable need for involvement of broad sections of the white people as active participants in the struggle for Negro freedom. Both Negro and whites must see that such united action is to their mutual advantage.

As this discussion develops the CPUSA, while supporting the slogan of "Black Power" as it explains it, also explains the significance of its analysis that the struggle has entered a "new stage". General Secretary Gus Hall states "the demands now go into areas that Big Business considers its private preserve, on which the monopolist has placed a 'No Trespassing' sign", referring to the real meaning of economic and political equality. Hall continues to point out that the Negro Freedom Movement "will also come up against the workings of the state-monopoly conspiracy" and has the task of helping to break up this conspiracy.

Approaching it from a different angle CPUSA National Chairman Henry Winston, in a recent report, emphasised that "monopoly capital" was "the class source of the oppression of Negro Americans" and that a much greater effort must be made to involve the trade unions in the fight for Negro equality and that "the economic needs of the Negro people cannot be met by any programme of self help . . . but must be tackled by the entire labour movement".

Labour - Negro Peoples Alliance

Parallel to the implications of realising Negro political power goes the imperative need for the Negro Freedom Movement to draw the lesson for a Labour-Negro peoples alliance. While not a new idea it has a new significance today. In the wider context of American developments it could serve as the cornerstone for a broad national anti-monopoly alliance of trade unionists, the Negro people, the forces of the peace movement, the New Left among the students, the women and all Socialist-minded people and organisations.

To achieve a Labour-Negro peoples alliance means that both the Negro Freedom Movement and the trade unions must develop new anti-monopoly perspectives, an understanding that such an alliance is in the sectional interests of each against a common enemy, and that independent action is vitally necessary. It will be easier for the Freedom Movement to draw such conclusions, but the rumblings today even in the top circles of trade union leadership reflect new thinking and above all pressure from the workers at the point of production.

While these fundamental questions of strategy are being thrashed out, the Negro Freedom Movement in alliance with the trade unionists and Peace Movement have immediate struggles that need attention—the fight to reinstate Congressman Adam Clayton Powell to the chairmanship of the US Congress Committee on Labour and Education, to support the aspirations of the so-called Freedom Budget without catering to the illusions of its sponsors, to intensify the fight to end America's invasion of Vietnam and to withdraw all American military forces, to carry on the fight for Negro rights, especially jobs and equal wages, both South and North, and to compel the trade unions with their active support to initiate a widespread organising drive for trade union organisation in the South, with special attention to the demands and aspirations of the Negro workers.

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Antonio Gramsci

James Harvey

THIRTY years ago, on April 27th, 1937, Antonio Gramsci died in Rome, after spending the last ten years of his life in prison. The publication of his *Letters from Prison* in 1947 and of his *Prison Notebooks* in 1948 made a profound impression in Italy, and the ideas he set down in these notebooks have played a most important part in the growth of the Italian Communist Party since the war and in the spread of the influence of Marxist thought in Italy. Yet it is remarkable that outside Italy the ideas of this outstanding Marxist thinker are still so little known and appreciated.

An English translation by Dr. Louis Marks of a selection from the Prison Notebooks was published in 1957, but this pioneering enterprise did not make the impact that might have been expected.[1] Gramsci seems to have had a wider impact in France, where a French translation appeared in 1959,[2] and translations are beginning to appear in other countries. The Austrian Marxist, Franz Marek, has written: "The very first contact with Gramsci's thought makes clear that in no circumstances could it have been accepted by the communist movement in the Stalin period."[3] His ideas seem to fit naturally into the new intellectual climate that has gradually developed since 1956, and it is not surprising that his contribution to Marxist thought is being more and more eagerly studied in many countries.[4]

Gramsci's Life

Antonio Gramsci was born on January 23rd, 1891 in the village of Ales in Sardinia. His father was registry clerk and the family lived in great poverty when Gramsci was a child. At the age of 11 he had to leave school and the frail, hunch-backed boy, whose health was never good, had to work ten hours a day, including Sundays, carrying loads heavier than himself. "Many nights I cried secretly because my whole body was in pain" he wrote later. At 13 he was able to return to school, and eventually in 1911 he won a scholarship to Turin University. Another scholarship winner in the same year was Palmiro Togliatti. At Turin, Gramsci studied Italian literature, linguistics, history and philosophy, in very difficult conditions at first owing to the inadequate scholarship grant which his family could not afford to supplement, and a prolonged illness from which he suffered. At the university, like many of the other students, he became an ardent admirer of the idealist philosopher, Benedetto Croce.

Gramsci was a socialist before he left Sardinia, and in 1914 his participation in the struggle against Italy's entry into the war made him a militant socialist. He joined the staff of the Turin Socialist newspaper *Avanti*, contributing dramatic criticism as well as articles on political and cultural subjects. Later he was the first to recognise the importance of Pirandello. In September 1917, after the great five-day rising of the Turin workers against the war, when 500 were killed and 2,000 seriously injured, he became secretary of the Turin section of the Italian Socialist Party.

Becomes a Marxist

All through 1917 Gramsci had in his articles defended Lenin and the Bolsheviks. His study of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin—and of Labriola, the Italian Marxist philosopher—had by now led him to reject Crocean idealism in favour of Marxism; but from an early stage his independence of mind, his intellectual background and his upbringing among the Sardinian peasants, combined to add a distinctive flavour to his Marxism. One of his articles published in *Avanti* in December 1917, entitled "The Revolution against *Capital*", is of special interest as it already expresses his opposition to all forms of dogmatism which was to remain with him all his life. The Mensheviks and others, he wrote, who had wrongly interpreted *Capital* to mean that Russia needed a prolonged period of capitalist development before a socialist revolution could take place, had made it "the book of the bourgeoisie rather than of the proletariat"; the October Revolution was a great blow against all formal, fatalist interpretations of Marxism. History was not made by economic forces but by men, acting collectively, who learned to understand, guide and adapt these forces to their will.

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[1] Antonio Gramsci: *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*. (Lawrence and Wishart.) Unfortunately it is now out of print. A new translation of a larger selection from the Prison Notebooks is to be published in due course by Lawrence and Wishart.

[2] A. Gramsci: *Oeuvres Choisies*. (Editions Sociales, Paris.) This is still available.

[3] *Weg und Ziel*, February 1966. (Monthly theoretical journal of the Austrian Communist Party, of which Franz Marek is the editor.) In what follows I have made great use of this article, and also of Dr. Marks's introduction to his 1957 translation.

[4] For example Louis Althusser, the French Marxist philosopher, whose books have aroused great interest—and controversy—in France, has been influenced by Gramsci.

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"Ordine Nuovo"

After the end of the war the Italian workers and peasants engaged in large-scale militant struggles with the employers and landowners. The Factory Councils, which had been set up during the war by the employers, were rapidly changing their character as the revolutionary spirit of the workers rose. Gramsci thought that these councils could develop into a powerful instrument of the working-class movement and play the same role in Italy as the Soviets had in Russia. With Togliatti and a group of young socialists (their ages ranged from 24 to Gramsci's 28) he founded the weekly newspaper, *Ordine Nuovo*, in May 1919, and the paper became the organ of the Factory Councils in Turin. The movement assumed a revolutionary significance in the spring of 1920 when the workers took over control of the largest factories in the city, but this position could not be maintained. After an eleven-day general strike in Turin in April, 1920, which did not spread to the rest of the country, the employers re-established their authority. Although the Socialist Party had affiliated to the Communist International, the weakness and hesitations of its leaders had ensured the victory of the employers.

In May 1920, *Ordine Nuovo* published a programme "For the renewal of the Socialist Party" which had been adopted by the Turin section of the party and written by Gramsci. It was singled out by Lenin as being fully in accord with the principles of the Third International.

The programme declared that great possibilities for revolutionary advance existed but that there was also a widespread false optimism, which looked on the revolution as in some sense inevitable and thus created a grave danger. Either there would be a conquest of power by the workers, or a tremendous reaction by the propertied classes, who would spare no violence to suppress the working class and the peasants. But the programme was rejected by the majority of the delegates at the Conference of the Socialist Party held at Livorno in January 1921. Gramsci joined with the large left-wing minority of the conference in the foundation of the Italian Communist Party, and he was elected a member of its central committee. *Ordine Nuovo* became a daily instead of a weekly paper. On the first page was Lassalle's motto: To tell the truth is revolutionary.

Communist Party Formed

The newly-formed Communist Party was at once faced with the rising strength of the Fascist reaction and the growing violence of Mussolini's blackshirt bands, culminating in the March on Rome in October,1922. It became more and more necessary to fight for the preservation of democratic liberties, rather than for the revolutionary capture of power, but in this extremely difficult situation the Communist Party was gravely handicapped because Bordiga, its first secretary, held the view that fascism was simply another form of bourgeois rule, no better and no worse than the parliamentary form. He was therefore opposed to the policy of forming a united front with the Socialist Party and other democratic organisations as proposed by the Third International, and in this attitude he had the support of the majority of the party.

Gramsci took the lead in the struggle against the ultra-leftism of Bordiga and gradually succeeded in winning more and more support for the united front.[5] In October 1922 *Ordine Nuovo* had had to cease publication, but in March 1924, Gramsci, who was now secretary of the Italian Communist Party (Bordiga was in prison, as were many other communist leaders) was able to found a new newspaper, called *Unita*. The assassination of Matteoti, a Socialist deputy, in circumstances pointing to the complicity of the Government, and the massive protest movement which then arose, threw the Fascist regime into temporary confusion, and in the elections that followed a number of Communists including Gramsci were elected to parliament. Gramsci proposed the organisation of a political general strike to force the overthrow of Mussolini's government, but the Italian Socialist Party and the other opposition parties refused to join in any decisive action. The Government recovered its strength and in November 1926 proclaimed the emergency laws prohibiting all opposition political parties.

Imprisonment and the Notebooks

On November 8th, 1926, Gramsci was arrested together with other Communist deputies in spite of their parliamentary immunity. The travesty of a trial eventually took place in Rome in May 1928. He was sentenced to twenty years imprisonment, after the public prosecutor had proclaimed: "For twenty years we must stop that brain working." His wife, who went to live in Moscow, suffered a nervous collapse from which she never fully recovered so he was never again to see her or his two children. He was transferred to the prison at Turi di Bari where, deprived of medical care and given atrocious prison diet, he was slowly and systematically driven to death. In the first years of

[5] His work was ultimately crowned with success when the Third Congress of the Italian Communist Party held at Lyons in January 1926 supported the united front policy by an overwhelming majority. Gramsci retained his belief in the united front policy throughout the years he was in prison, even though he was aware that it had been abandoned by the Third International in 1928 and for some years afterwards.

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his imprisonment he was woken three times a night "for inspection".

Under this régime his health, never good, gradually deteriorated. He suffered a serious physical breakdown in May 1931 and a second in March 1933. Nevertheless he rejected proposals made to him that he should ask Mussolini for his release. In 1936 many leading intellectuals and others, including Romain Rolland and the Archbishop of Canterbury, joined in a demand that he should be set free. He was transferred to a clinic in Rome, and there he died on April 27th, 1937.

Soon after he was first arrested Gramsci wrote to his sister-in-law giving a list of the subjects he intended to study. In spite of all the difficulties of the prison régime, aggravated by his bad health, frequent insomnia and nervous exhaustion, and without the aid of the Marxist classics which he had to quote from memory (though he was able to receive some periodicals and books from time to time), and being under the necessity of writing in such a way as to avoid arousing the suspicions of the prison censor, he ultimately succeeded in filling 2,848 closely packed pages in 32 Notebooks.

Among the subjects he examined in the Notebooks were: the nature of philosophy and the origin and characteristics of Marxist philosophy; the philosophy of Benedetto Croce; the Italian Risorgimento and the struggle for national independence in the nineteenth century; the part played in society by intellectuals and, in particular, the role of Italian intellectuals; political parties and the state; education, the Catholic religion, popular taste in literature, literary and dramatic criticism including a study of the Tenth Canto of Dante's Inferno. Although the conditions in which the notebooks were written had the result that the paragraphs do not always follow logically from each other, and are sometimes rather condensed, the notebooks are not particularly difficult to read. Gramsci had an extremely clear (and imaginative) style of writing and this is reflected in the Notebooks. Moreover, since they make no claim to be a complete, finished exposition, they have a peculiarly stimulating character, forcing the reader to think for himself. In view of the range of subjects covered, I cannot do more than give a very partial and inevitably over-simplified account of what seem to me to be some of the most important contributions made by Gramsci to Marxism, in the hope that this will stimulate readers of *Marxism Today* to study the "Prison Notebooks" themselves.

The Importance of Ideas

At the risk of greatly over-simplifying it may be suggested that the central element in Gramsci's thought was the importance of ideas in the making of history, and of thought as the stimulus of action. He often referred to Marx's statement that "Theory becomes a material force when it grips the masses", stressing that popular beliefs had an energy which made them equivalent to material forces, and that philosophies which became popular could acquire the "hardness of granite". In speaking of a person's ideas Gramsci means, not only his conscious political attitude and the ideas he has in relation to his immediate material interests, but his whole world outlook comprising his moral and cultural attitudes, and his habits of thought.

All men are "philosophers", wrote Gramsci in the opening paragraphs of his notebook on historical materialism (though it is necessary to define the limits of this "spontaneous" philosophy and to seek to raise it to a more conscious and critical level). It is collective human will, guided and formed by ideas, that is the motive force of history. He therefore undertook a thorough criticism of "economism" and other varieties of mechanical determinism which suggested in one way or another that the development of the productive forces would by itself create conditions favourable to a socialist revolution, or that their development made socialism inevitable.

Determinism

This determinist, fatalist element had been an ideological "aroma" of Marxism, a form of religion and of stimulation. When one does not have the initiative in the struggle and suffers a series of defeats, mechanical determinism becomes a formidable power of moral resistance, of patient and obstinate perseverance. "I am defeated for a time but the nature of things is on my side over a long period." Thus it had played a useful part during certain periods in the history of the working-class movement, but the time had come to bury it with full honours. It could only operate as a cause of passivity.

A determinist element has crept into the outlook of the working-class movement in many forms, such as the "economism" which Lenin fought against in the early years of the century (in *What is to be Done*, etc). It was widespread in Germany at the end of the previous century under the influence of Kautsky, and the prevailing bourgeois positivist philosophy exerted its influence in this direction (deriving the concept of science and its methodology from the natural sciences, and applying them to the social sciences). Gramsci detected elements of determinism in the writings of Plekhanov, and to an even greater extent in Bukharin's Popular Study entitled *Historical Materialism—A System of Sociology*, published in 1921. A fatalist interpretation of Marxism became a feature of official thinking in the Soviet Union under Stalin. It is

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indeed a deep-rooted tendency and still exerts an influence today, for example, in the notion which is sometimes expressed that capitalism is bound to get into critical difficulties sooner or later.

Is Socialism Inevitable?

This is not surprising, for it is a reflection of the old problem of determinism and free will which has puzzled so many philosophers in the past, and it raises the problem: in what sense, if any, is socialism inevitable? Gramsci insisted that laws of economic and social development are not to be compared with laws of natural science which can be used to make accurate predictions of the outcome of experiments, but rather have the character of "laws of tendency". There is nothing inevitable about the future. One can only foresee the future of society in so far as one can help to shape it by understanding its history and placing oneself on the side of the progressive forces in it. There is no objective historical reality apart from men; and politics, which is man's struggle to change society, is the substance of history. In the term "historical materialism" the accent should be placed on the first word "historical", and not on the second which has a metaphysical origin.

In the first *Thesis on Feuerbach* Marx said that the chief defect of all previous materialism was that reality was understood only in the form of object or contemplation, but not as "sensuous human activity, as praxis, not subjectively". There was therefore a special significance for Gramsci in the term "philosophy of praxis" which he used in his prison notebooks as a substitute for the word "Marxism" which would have aroused the suspicions of the prison censor. Philosophy has no purpose unless it is united with the actual struggle to change the world, that is, with politics. Thus Gramsci wrote: "Marxism is philosophy which is also politics, and politics which is also philosophy." Dogmatism can creep into Marxist theory as soon as it ceases to be closely linked with practice and to be based on a realistic appraisal of the actual conditions. Hence Gramsci was fond of quoting Romain Rolland's motto: pessimism of the intelligence, optimism of the will.

He saw that the revolution in Western Europe would have to take a very different form from the one it took in the special conditions prevailing in Russia. There, the coercive force of the state had been the main instrument of rule. But in the West the state was "only an advanced trench behind which was a robust chain of fortresses and casemates", that is to say, the structure of civil society was more complex and highly developed than in Russia and this enabled the capitalist class to exercise a more profound intellectual, moral and cultural influence over the people and thus to obtain their consent to its rule to a much greater extent than had been possible for Tsarism:

> "It seems to me that Lenin had understood that the war of movement, which was successfully applied in the East in 1917, would have to change into a war of position which was the only one possible in the West . . . this seems to me the significance of the formula of the 'united front'. . . . Only Lenin did not have time to elaborate his formula, and in any case he could only have done so theoretically, whereas the task was fundamentally a national one, that is, it required an understanding of the territory and of those elements of a trench or fortress type represented in civil society."

The Concept of Hegemony

Gramsci held that the Italian working class could not advance to socialism without forging an alliance with all other classes exploited by the bourgeoisie and above all with the peasantry of the South. The main obstacle to this was, not the coercive power of the Italian state, but the willing acceptance by the mass of the peasants of the ideas of the ruling class—not only the political ideas, but the religious and cultural outlook which had been developed over a long period and absorbed by the peasants. The task of the working class was to break the hegemony established by the Italian capitalists over the Southern peasants. In his approach to this problem Gramsci worked out his theory of "hegemony" (egemonia) which is exercised by a ruling class in "civil society", through the so-called "private" organisations such as the churches, the schools, trade unions, etc. Thus civil society, as defined by Gramsci, comprised all those relationships between men and women in society, which are not the basic productive relations (the economic structure) or the public, political relations connected with the state.[6] He described civil society and political society as "the two great floors of the superstructure" corresponding to the two methods by which the bourgeoisie maintains its rule: the method of gaining consent through the influence of ideas (and in this process the bourgeois intellectuals play a crucial role) and the use of the coercive apparatus of the state. There can be periods when the ruling class relies mainly on the coercive power of the state—a condition which Gramsci called "statolatry" (statolatria). But at other times a certain equilibrium is established in the relations between the ruling class and the subject classes in civil and in political

[6] Thus Gramsci gives the term "civil society" a different and more restricted meaning than the one used by Hegel and by Marx in his early works—"the sum total of the material conditions of life" (see *Preface to the Critique of Political Economy*).

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society, though the balance between them is likely to be continually disturbed and re-established in a different form.

In order that the working class can break the hegemony of the bourgeoisie it must build up its own hegemony, not only by means of economic struggle but also by developing its own philosophy, Marxism, so as to transform the intellectual and moral outlook of the people. For this purpose "the most universal concepts, the most refined and decisive ideological weapons" need to be elaborated. Gramsci refers often to Lenin's theory of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry (developed in *Two Tactics*) and gave Lenin the credit for developing the doctrine of hegemony in opposition to the various "economist" tendencies and as complementary to the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But it seems clear that, as elaborated by Gramsci, it is a new concept which can be important for the analysis of the superstructure and the relations between its various levels, and may also have great potential value in stimulating further developments in Marxist theory.

The Intellectuals

The hegemony of the Italian capitalists in Southern Italy was, in Gramsci's view, exercised principally through the influence of the Southern intellectuals. "Every class creates with itself, organically, one or more groups of intellectuals who give it homogeneity and consciousness of its function." In order to break the hegemony of the capitalists (in Southern Italy or elsewhere) the working class must create its own core of independent intellectuals and this is one of the main tasks of a Marxist party. But the new type of intellectual should not only be capable of contributing to the development of Marxist thought but must be actively involved in practical life as an organiser. "There can be no organisation without intellectuals, that is, without organisers and leaders. . . ."

Gramsci also said that all the members of a revolutionary party "ought to be considered as intellectuals . . . what is important is their function, which is direction and organisation, that is, it is educational, that is, intellectual", and he described the Communist Party as a "collective intellectual".

The Party is faced with a further task in relation to the "traditional intellectuals". These are the intellectuals who are not organically associated with the capitalist class, but appear as "representatives of a historical continuity uninterrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in social and political forces". They see themselves as independent of the ruling class and this is a fact of great importance in the ideological and political field. Gramsci considered that "one of the most important characteristics of any class which develops towards power is its struggle to assimilate and conquer 'ideologically' the traditional intellectuals". One volume of the prison notebooks is wholly devoted to a study of Italian intellectuals, their special characteristics and the role they had played in Italian society.

Criticism

Criticism of the ideas of the traditional intellectuals should never be purely destructive. It is necessary to remember that a mode of living, of working or of thinking which still persists is "rational" in the sense that it must have had a useful function in the past and have facilitated the development of society; and the fact that it may have become widespread because it was appropriate to the ruling class at one time, does not mean that it should be wholly rejected on that account. Even if it has become as a whole an obstacle to progress, there may be some part of it which still retains its rationality and can be absorbed in some way into a new conception:

> "In considering historical-critical problems, scientific discussion should not be conceived as a judicial process, where there is an accused and a prosecutor, who must prove that the accused is guilty and should be removed from the scene. In scientific discussion . . . one should take up the point of view that one's adversary can express a need which ought to be incorporated, even if only in a subordinate position, in one's own conception. To understand and evaluate one's opponent realistically (and sometimes an opponent can represent the whole of past thought) . . . means taking up a 'critical' point of view, the only fruitful one in scientific research."

Gramsci disagreed strongly with Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution and with the policy of the Left Opposition led in 1926 by Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev. But it was in keeping with his opposition to the purely destructive type of criticism, that one of the last things he did before his arrest was to write in October 1926 to the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, on the eve of its 15th Conference, expressing the deep anxiety aroused among Italian communists by the "violent manner" in which the Stalin-Trotsky controversy was being conducted.

Gramsci was very critical of those Marxists, like Bukharin in his *Popular Manual*, who only attacked the weakest thinkers on their weakest points in order to win easy verbal victories. There is a difference between the ideological front and the politico-military front:

> "In the political and military struggle it may be good tactics to break through at the points of least resistance in order to be in a position to invest the

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stronger points with the maximum forces made available by having eliminated the weakest auxiliaries, etc. . . . On the ideological front, however, defeat of the auxiliaries and the minor followers has an almost negligible importance: on this front it is necessary to defeat the eminent people."

Croce

Gramsci applied these principles in his criticism of Croce, the most outstanding Italian intellectual of the early years of the century. His writings on philosophy, history, aesthetics and other subjects had a wide influence in other countries as well as in Italy. Although Croce's philosophy was idealist and his political outlook was liberal, Gramsci considered that some aspects of his thought were valuable and, for example, the concept of hegemony was partly derived from Croce's theory of "ethical-political history". There were close links between Croce's philosophy and classical German idealism (from Kant to Hegel), and just as Marx and Engels developed Marxism out of classical German philosophy so Gramsci thought that modern Marxism could learn from Croce. The longest continuous section (90 pages) of the notebook on historical materialism is devoted to a thorough critique of Croce's views and this, he wrote,

> "is the only historically fertile way to achieve an adequate renewal of the philosophy of praxis, which has been 'popularised' by the requirements of daily practical life, and to raise it to the height that it must reach in order to solve the more complicated tasks which are set by contemporary developments in the struggle, that is, towards the creation of a new integrated culture which will have the popular character of the Protestant Reformation and of the French enlightenment as well as the classical character of Greek culture and of the Italian Renaissance—a culture which in the words of Carducci[7] will be a synthesis of Maximilian Robespierre and Emmanuel Kant, of politics and philosophy, in a dialectical unity which will be intrinsic to a social group[8] that is not solely French or German, but European and world-wide."

[7] Italian poet and critic (1825-1907).

[8] Meaning the working class.

Culture and Politics

The reference to the "popular character" of the Protestant Reformation reflects one of Gramsci's main preoccupations, and many of his notes on the Italian intellectuals and on literature are concerned with folklore and other aspects of popular ways of thinking in an attempt to discover what it is that enables a particular outlook to become deeply-rooted among the people. For this reason he also made a thorough study of the Catholic religion which was so influential in Italy. He was deeply convinced that in the advance towards "the moment of hegemony and consent" the struggle on the moral and cultural front was just as necessary as it was on the economic and political fronts.

He understood, too, that the cultural front was very different from the political front. In a note on art and propaganda he said that the artist must have perspectives which are necessarily less precise and definite than those of the politician, and that he must, so to speak, be less "sectarian". The politician imagines man both as he is and as he ought to become, and his work consists in persuading men to move out of their existing state in order to become capable of collectively achieving a certain aim, that is to say, of "conforming" to this aim. The artist necessarily represents realistically "that which is" at a given moment, and so his work is personal, non-conformist, etc. Therefore, from a political point of view, the politician will never be content with the artist and cannot be: the artist will always be behind the times, always anachronistic, always superseded by the real movement.

In his *Notes on Macchiavelli, on Politics and on the Modern State* Gramsci turns to problems of political parties, of the state, of bureaucracy (both in the state and in political parties), of the relations between governments and governed and between leaders and led. In Macchiavelli's day the founder of a united Italian state could only have been a strong absolute monarch, a Prince. For Gramsci, the founder of a Socialist Italian state, the modern Prince, could only be a political Party—the Italian Communist Party

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Discussion Contributions on:

Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism

From Co-existence to Pro-existence

Paul Oestreicher

(The author who was born in Germany and educated in New Zealand, is a graduate in political science. He has made a special study of political practice in the People's Democracies, and has a wide personal knowledge of Eastern Europe. He is a priest of the Church of England and in 1964 became Associate Secretary of the International Department of the British Council of Churches. He is responsible in particular for matters relating to East-West relations.)

WILLIAM BLAKE was neither an orthodox socialist nor an orthodox Christian. He was a visionary. An artist. Accordingly he did not try to imprison truth in the intellectual concepts of doctrine. *The vision* is true and remains true as long as it is lived. The moment it is enshrined it is robbed of its dynamism and is at best a static representation of truth. Both the Christian Church and the Communist Movement have been guilty of the dogmatism that dehumanises reality.

The "Humanity of God"

In *Jerusalem*, Blake wrote: "Are not politics and religion the same thing? Brotherhood is religion". I am prepared to state quite simply that these two propositions, naïve perhaps, are as true as any formulation can be. At any rate they are true if "religion" is assumed to be the Christian faith. Yet, paradoxically, the history of the Christian Church appears to be, and largely is, the affirmation of almost the exact opposite. The institutional Church has for centuries managed to deny the essential humanity of its mission. Where that mission has been effectively lived, then it has generally been done in spite of and not because of established religion. I speak, in this context, unhesitatingly of the apostasy of the Church. At the same time there has always been a clear historic witness of the "humanity of God" both inside and outside religious structures. Sociologically this has, however, been a minority phenomenon. It is therefore my contention that the Marxist analysis of religion (mainly Christian) based on observed history is, broadly speaking, right. There can, therefore, be no creative dialogue between Marxists and Christians until the latter make this far reaching "concession". In reality it is not a concession at all; it is, for Christians, a pre-requisite for the practice of the faith at all. Theologically, it is the penitence without which the Church (judged by its own criteria) is dead.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a deeply religious man, came to see in a Nazi prison shortly before his execution that religion, even presumably his own, could be a serious impediment to that total solidarity with humanity for which Jesus of Nazareth stands. That total solidarity was the content of Blake's vision. Blake restored the word religion to its proper human dignity. Bonhoeffer perhaps despaired of this possibility when he put forward the proposition of "religionless Christianity" as something necessary for mature man, man "come of age". The concept has become something of an intellectual plaything for "with it" theologians who, by and large, have shied away from the radical social and political implications not only of Bonhoeffer's thought but of his life. It must be remembered that Bonhoeffer did not die as a "religious" martyr, insisting on the purity of religion and the inviolability of the Church. He died as a political plotter, a party to the plan to murder Hitler. In this he was much closer to many Communists than to most Christians. If I were asked to name a "Bonhoeffer of the present moment" it would be Abram Fischer, in his South African prison.

Repentance and Self-Criticism

Nor will vague Christian recognition that the Church has not lived up to its beliefs do. The penitence of the Church must become much more concrete. The idea of "let bygones be bygones" is a Christian impossibility, however tactically desirable. Anyway, it is psychological nonsense. One example of what I have in mind will suffice. In

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Germany the first victims of Nazi terror were Communists. Their martyrdom began even before that of the Jews. In the face of this persecution the Church remained totally silent. Not a finger was raised. Many of the silent Christians nodded their heads, a few shook theirs: which, either way, to a man being beaten is totally irrelevant. In the words of Christian tradition the Church "passed by on the other side". Anyone who believes that this is irrelevant to the present dialogue is both devoid of human sensitivity and, apart from that, a fool.

The only proper and possible subject of the dialogue is man, the double question: what do men need and how are they to get it? And that will inevitably force us to ask ourselves: how must we change if this is to happen? The Christian technical term for this is "repentance". If repentance does not mean radical self-criticism (and change), personal and corporate, it is irrelevant and just another facet of pietist escapism.

It is relatively unimportant whether, in the dialogue (which only means anything if it is accompanied by or at least followed by joint political action) religion is reinstated and used in Blake's sense (in defiance of history) or whether we operate with the concept of a religionless faith. I am torn between the two and like Christians, Communists will have to learn to live with this terminological problem. Meanwhile, Christians must come to terms with the fact that phenomenologically their religion is still partly what Marx thought it was and is also partly an ally of humanity. The distinction is that between true faith and false faith.

Common Roots and Aims

It is not "ideological imperialism" on the part of Christians to insist that Marxism is (at least in part) a product of the Judeo-Christian tradition. But it is not, as some Christians would have it, a heresy. It is a corrective. Our common roots are inescapable. They are the one element in the dialogue that makes it easier than many assume. Justice for man is our common objective. And in addition we share the certainty that it is achievable. Yet in very different ways we have, on both sides, distorted that certainty almost beyond recognition.

Dialectical thinking in both camps (Christians have tended to call it casuistry) has been used as a pretext to justify almost any distortion. We have both, in practice, denied our optimistic and justified hopes for man. We must both, in the dialogue, work towards the restoration of our vision for man and of man. Traditionally, Christians have, in this context, spoken of the Kingdom of God. Marxists, more simply, have spoken of Communism. When, one day, they are seen to be very nearly the same thing, the dialogue will have reached its proper conclusion. It will be both a "scientific" and a "faithful" path that leads to that end. But meanwhile both terms, if insisted on too rigidly, will hinder rather than help us on a generally uncharted voyage.

Radical Self-Examinations

I have spoken of certain Christian prerequisites for the dialogue, foremost among them the need for radical self-examination. It is not for Christians to demand it, but progress is not likely unless Marxists are prepared to eat similar humble pie. It is obvious that in the short history of Marxist practice—which means Marxist power—there have been, and still are, plenty of black spots. No more and no less than honesty are called for from both sides. Neither dialectics not casuistry are adequate "get outs". And when I speak of black spots I do not of course imply a need for self-denigration. The black spots simply illustrate our considerable failure to reconcile theory and practice. The crusades and the inquisition were perversions of Christianity; as Stalinism was a perversion of Marxism. Wherever these and related phenomena remain, the dialogue cannot proceed while ignoring these facts.

A splendid example of this occurred at a meeting of Christians and Marxists which I attended last year. A young Marxist philosopher from one of the People's Democracies spoke movingly on why he gave political support to the Party in his country. As soon as his address was over an even younger Western Christian who had recently visited the speaker's country began to throw in the speaker's face a whole catalogue of abuses he had discovered, not vague abuses, but concrete examples of injustice being suffered by many people known to him personally. Before the indignant young Christian who wanted to know how all this could be squared with the speaker's conscience and humanistic ideals had ended speaking, he was interrupted by the Christian chairman: "This", he was told, "is not part of dialogue. What if our Marxist friends were to begin telling us of all the unjust suffering being caused in Spain and elsewhere by Christians?"—and there, publicly, the matter rested. But the young philosopher had merely been too polite to rebuke the Chairman. Privately he regretted the termination of this challenge. "If", he said privately, "we are not prepared to face questions like this squarely, then the dialogue is an intellectual luxury which we can ill afford." He was right. We must be prepared to see ourselves through the eyes of others—and to accept the truth, however much it hurts.

If we are prepared to do that both the Church and the Party will be strengthened. But what is much more important: humanity will have won a victory in the process, because the object of all this must be the genuine advancement of man.

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Rooted in Human Reality

I believe that once we learn to trust each other we shall find that we can go a long way together. We shall sometimes divide, but not always with all the Christians on one side and all the Communists on the other. We all believe that it is our business to co-operate with true humanity in changing the world. We may find that our greatest difficulties arise over means rather than ends. It is at that point that Christianity may have a unique contribution to make by being uncompromisingly humanistic. What I mean is that the humanity of God in Christ implies the limitless value of every human being. No man may therefore ever be used as a mere means to achieving a better hypothetical future for all men: but that lands us right into the dialogue itself—the meaning and purpose of man, and beyond man, of creation itself.

My constant concern is that this necessary philosophic wrestling must remain rooted in human reality. If, for instance, Christians and Communists are not together concerned with finding a tolerably just *end* to the fighting in Vietnam, they deserve little sympathy. Equally, if some Christians in their newly discovered spirit of comradeship with "friendly" communists forget about their "revisionist" comrades rotting away in some jail, the exercise is degrading. It is one of my own happier memories to have been able to make some small contribution to the release of a socialist prisoner. In the process I was asked by a prominent ruling communist why I was so interested in securing the release of a man who was surely no friend of the Church. My reply: because he is a *man*. I know that Communist friends have done as much for Christians.

This commitment to the personal dimensions of humanity is an inescapable necessity. But not at the price of political realism. The two do not clash even though the tension between them may at times be hard to bear. What I am sure of is that no man may ever be sacrificed to the demands of any theory. If the theory does demand this, it is, to that extent, wrong. Ideals must never dominate men. For that reason I believe Marxism and Christianity both rightly deny that they are idealistic. They both claim to be realistic—and true. But the word truth begs too many questions to be used lightly.

The Family of Man

The most weighty objections to both Christianity and Marxism come from those who claim that neither allow for man's real depravity. Christians certainly give it a high theoretical place by constructing an edifice around sin and its conquest—but thereby they ultimately appear to be theologising it away. Marxists, too, "allow" for it as a passing economically conditioned phase. But neither, I believe, can really explain man's irrational inhumanity to man. The challenge to us both is: can we *end* it, or at least begin to end it?

We shall need to harness all the skills of economic theory, of technology, of psychology, and of science at every level to restore the family of man. And we shall need to activate immense new dimensions of love. All this, both for Christians and Marxists, implies struggle. We shall need to discover the nature of that struggle. Christians would need to deny that that struggle need be (or perhaps even could be) violent. It is a struggle for all men, even for man's opponents. How to express this is no easy task. It is, for example, obviously a struggle for South Africa's white people as much as for the black. The paradox is that if these white people are not frustrated in their present policies, they are doomed. To defeat a man for his own good is no easy concept *to practise*. It does seem to me that the phrase *pro-existence* coined by Christians in East Germany, is better than mere *co-existence*. In the one case no more than live and let live (and sometimes less) is posited. In the other life is assumed to be *for others*.

Towards a Good End

All the while I have not ventured beyond this world. For this I make no apology. It is not because my readers are likely to be mainly atheists. It is because Jesus should have left his Church in no doubt that love of men is our only legitimate business. Loving God is only possible by loving men. "What you do—or fail to do—for a man, you do—or fail to do—for God." And that puts believers and non-believers completely on a level. Actions alone count. Theories are only relevant if they lead to action—*for men*. This world is the only possible place for such action. If our theories (whether we claim them to be divine or scientific) impede such action, we must change them. Each in our "camp", if we are afraid to be called "heretics" or "revisionists", we shall possibly make little progress. However "open" we think we are, dogmatism remains our temptation because dogma can cover up a multitude of contradictions.

And we shall need to learn each other's intolerable jargon. That in itself might hasten some essential demythologising on both sides. And all the while we need to remember that most people are neither Christians or Marxists. They are hungry.

In case we think we know the answers or even the right questions we could do worse than listen to Bertolt Brecht who loathed glib words. With Marx—and Christ—he believed in a good end for man. He knew too that it will need to be of our making. At

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the end of *The Good Woman of Setzuan* (in itself a tremendous "Christian-Marxist" dialogue) Brecht says:

> "We are deflated, nettled, to see the curtain down, and nothing settled. How could a better ending be arranged? Can we change man? Or can the world be changed? Will new gods do the trick? Or none? Would that we knew. We don't! So work it out yourself, my friend: how do we help a good man to a happy end. You go and write the ending to this play. A good one there must be; there's *got* to be a way.

We shall find the way, I believe, by setting out on it together—in hope.

Marxism and Criticism

Margot Heinemann

I WOULD like to endorse strongly the main contention of Michael Long (*Marxism Today*, November 1966) that attempts at political control, censorship and "guidance" of the arts by State and party leadership in the name of Marxism cannot be good either for art or for Socialism. It seems to me this is so because:

(1) Marxist criticism can help us to see why a particular artist in his historical setting works in a particular way; hence it should help us to understand better the work of art itself. It is not a grading and recording machine for assessing relative aesthetic values.

(2) The new and valuable, in art as in science, can be discovered and recognised only in the course of experiment, discussion, conflict of ideas and methods. Cultural life is impoverished and stagnates where one view or style is imposed by administrative means.

(3) There is indeed much more to art than the simple paraphraseable "subject-matter". Because good artists are often innovators both in substance and style, they have to create the understanding and taste by which they are appreciated, and usually first in the young whose ways of seeing and feeling are less set in old patterns. The response to the new in art will therefore rarely be strongest in Political Committees or Cabinets.

(4) The attempt to impose an approved content and form upon artists (and scientists for that matter) by suppression and imprisonment on the one hand and lavish rewards on the other, has had disastrous results for art and for the advance of Socialism, inside and outside the Socialist countries. As we all know from experience, it has caused revulsion and disgust among left-wing intellectuals, which has prevented whole generations of them from seeing their future in alliance with Marxism and the Communist Party. Within the Socialist countries, it affects the social attitudes not only of artists but of many others, especially young people. Some become yes-men and time-servers; others, disaffected and cynical, imagine that only under western capitalism is freedom and integrity possible for the artist. This helps to explain why generous material provision for the arts has so often failed to produce art that interests and inspires the new generation—they have no confidence that the artist is telling the truth, and hence often disbelieve him when he is.

So far I strongly agree with Michael Long's case. But I disagree equally strongly with much that he says, which seems to me to empty out the baby with the bathwater, and ends by trivialising the conception of art (which it is one of the great virtues of Marxism to value and take seriously).[1]

"Cultural Renaissance?"

Although Long often argues very obscurely, so that I am uncertain at times whether I have got his meaning right, certain points stand out which I want to dispute. In doing this I shall limit myself to literature which I know more about,[2] and to a small part of his total argument.

Long's general argument, as I understand it, is that modern art and modern poetry provide a new revolutionary way of looking at the world, which Marxists ought to adopt as theirs. Unfortunately

[1] He also seems greatly to undervalue much Marxist critical work already done in particular fields of modern art by such critics as A. L. Morton, Alick West (*Crisis in Criticism* and *Mountain in the Sunlight*); George Lukacs (*Studies in European Realism*, *The Historical Novel*); Ernst Fischer (*Meaning of Art*); Arnold Kettle (*Introduction to the English Novel*). He also omits to mention the clear stand taken by the EC of our own Communist Party against political "guidance" and censorship of art.

[2] I suspect that the case is slightly different anyway in the visual arts, because colour, mass and line have not as inevitably a "denotation" (a reference to the world outside the work of art) as words have.

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Marxists, especially in the Soviet Union, have been prejudiced against this new "cultural renaissance" because the works were often difficult or obscure, and many of the artists expressed reactionary and sometimes Fascist social and political views. But such prejudice is absurd; for what matters is not what a work of art "says" or "means", but the new and exciting medium, the language and images of which it is composed.

I think I understand Long's motive. He wants to be free to read and enjoy Eliot and Yeats and Pound and to learn from them, despite their unpleasant opinions. He wants to be able to hang modern paintings on his walls even if the shop stewards don't want them in the canteen. But I think he could do this, as Marx read Balzac who was a royalist, without having to devalue art and literature by arguing that it is outside the artist's function to say anything intelligible about social life, and that when he does he is not to be taken seriously.

Long argues that the great writers in the modern literary and critical movement of the 20th century (he cites Ezra Pound, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, W. Carlos Williams, F. R. Leavis) have been "deeply committed to a whole cultural renaissance of their own which, in my opinion, should be our own as well". These writers "are seen to be directing us towards a common review of ideas with the largest cultural implications. *They imply and uphold a whole way of life*".[3]

It seems to me that some aspects, some insights of the writings and art Michael Long associates with this "cultural renaissance"[4] are indeed valuable to us and certainly can be "our own", indeed they have powerfully stimulated many people groping for an alternative not only to academic art but to capitalist society. Among these are the rejection of photographic naturalism as the sole method of art; the reaction against facile optimism and mushy sentimentality (e.g., about war, "progress" and love); the break with the "pathetic fallacy" and the recognition of nature as an independent existence; the effort to mirror in art the breakdown of old myths in face of modern, urban life and modern war; the devising of forms to express the complex and fragmented experience of people in industrial society (analogous to collage in painting): the place deliberately given to the less conscious and rational workings of the mind, to the intuitions expressed in fantasy and dreams and nightmare; and the derivation of poetic language from modern and not archaic idiom. These give rise to some of the "tough insights" into our present situation of Eliot or Yeats or Lawrence at their best of which Long says that their language through its use of metaphor can take us "flashing through regions where the intellect can only grope".

Unacceptable Attitudes

Some aspects, on the other hand, it seems to me cannot be "ours". There is, for example, the insistence that no good can come of rational scientific thought and scientifically based action, which is deeply built into the work and achievement of Pound and Eliot, and to some extent of D. H. Lawrence and Leavis: and hence into the way they use words. With this goes an idealisation of past and remote societies—in particular of hierarchically-ordered and/or church-dominated mediaeval or feudal societies—and a deep contempt for the ordinary man when he refuses to accept the lowly place ordered for him in such societies and aspires to democracy. This in turn gives rise to an extreme and sometimes absurd snobbery. I shall never forget the effect on me as a student, moved and excited by poems like *The Waste Land*, when I came upon these sentences in one of Eliot's critical essays, where he insists on the importance of allegiance to some (preferably religious) outside authority, rather than the "inner voice" of conscience:

> "The inner voice, in fact, sounds remarkably like an old principle . . . 'doing as one likes'. The possessors of the inner voice ride ten in a compartment to the football match at Swansea, listening to the inner voice, which breathes the eternal message of vanity, fear and lust." (*The Function of Criticism*, 1923.)

I could not at that time have formulated my opposition to Eliot's logical argument.[5] I simply felt that a man who could write in that way about a Welsh football crowd was not, without great reservations, *my* poet. I was, as Long would say, responding not so much to the denotation, the logical meaning, as to the connotation, the associations of the way it was put.

It is not so hard to understand how sensitive minds like Eliot's could come to adopt such attitudes (they are more than mere opinions). It is objectively true that all this rationalism and scientific thought came

[3] Long's italics. I am not sure what he means by this phrase in the context. I *think* he means that by their work they encourage us to look at the world in a different way and alter our likes and dislikes.

[4] I am not too keen on the general term "cultural renaissance", because, like Lukacs' term "modernism" for roughly the same group of phenomena, it seems to me to bundle together a number of very different works and tendencies.

[5] Indeed, so far as it was aimed at sloppy eclecticism and "liberal" lack of any principles, I might not have wanted to.

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in with the rise of capitalism, in the 17th century or thereabouts; that the consequence of the new freedom was the rise first of capitalism and then of imperialism; that the great power science placed at man's disposal has been used to create sometimes beauty and order, but also increasing squalor and destruction; that all social change so far therefore has an ambivalent character for the artist. As William Morris made his John Ball say about the break-up of the mediaeval village, "Ill were change at whiles, were it not for the change beyond the change". Marxists, if anyone, ought to understand writers who cannot equate advancing capitalism with personal freedom and happiness.

From Disgust to Reaction

Disgust with the modern world, then, drove Eliot, and others, to seek some kind of extreme solution. Rejecting Marxism, indeed deeply hostile to it, they came to think of the whole modern intellectual and technical development from the 17th century onwards as a kind of second Fall of Man, entailing a fatal split in society and deadly to art. In politics their attitudes became high—Tory, sometimes Fascist. One may share the disgust—it may, indirectly, enhance the quality of one's living—while utterly rejecting the solution and the attitudes it implies.[6]

So one can see for instance why D. H. Lawrence, bitter and angry at the stunted lives allowed to miners' families in his native Nottinghamshire, reacted violently against the industrial system. His novels, from the early "White Peacock" and "Sons and Lovers" to "Women in Love", "The Rainbow" and "Lady Chatterley" have tremendous value for us because of the vividness, warmth and intelligence with which he explores human relations and shows the ebb and flow of happiness and its continual degradation and waste. He saw that neither the old paternalist mine-owner nor the young efficiency-expert one were any good for the people. The collier Morel's brutality is no good, neither is Mrs. Morel's refinement. And so Lawrence tried to shake off that society and its drabness altogether, retreating to corners of wilderness and seemingly earlier social patterns, in Cornwall or Italy or New Mexico, and seeking in the old "dark gods" of sexual and sadistic rituals a Fascist-type blood brotherhood, an answer to the staleness of modern life. The sympathy with all human and animal life in Lawrence's best works is truly "life-enhancing". But when one is considering a particular work—a novel like "The Plumed Serpent" or stories like "The Woman Who Rode Away" or "The Ladybird"—it is surely impossible to ignore the distortion of the whole picture by the false "blood and darkness" solution evoked for real conflicts?

Other bits of past culture are exalted and romanticised in somewhat the same way in Pound (ancient China and mediaeval Provence, for example), and in Yeats (not only ancient Ireland, which he used mainly as pageantry and magic, but more directly, the 18th century Great Houses) and in Eliot.[7]

But, Long argues, all this is irrelevant. To ask "is what this poet is saying true or acceptable, and if so is he saying it well" is to ask a trivial question. The right question according to him is: "Does this poem make an adequate and lively enactment of a process in such a way that our lives will henceforth be enhanced because our perceptions of that process have been cleansed, clarified and sharpened?"

Works of literature have indeed sometimes been totally rejected, and even suppressed, in the name of Marxism, on the grounds that their ultimate moral or "message" is politically or philosophically unacceptable—while their vivid and perceptive rendering of real experience is ignored. This over-simple approach we should unreservedly condemn. For one thing, poets often write better than they know; and many of the memorable things in literature are found almost as asides, incidental to the main theme the writer is *trying* to develop. Or their experience may be ahead in some respects of ours.

Importance of Meaning

This does not mean, however, that one can treat what a work *says* as unimportant. True, the logical summary (or even prose paraphrase) of a poem is not at all the same thing as the poem.[8] A poem works *not only* at the level of logical statement *but also* at more concrete, less conscious, less rational levels, evoking subtle and powerful feelings and attitudes which the prose statement does not convey. But the statement, the meaning is an essential *part* of the total effect. A poem must mean before it can be. Otherwise we are back at poetry as "word-magic"—the late Romantic dilettante view.

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[6] The past societies were, of course, much unlike the picture evoked by the poets: most people had wretched lives in all of them.

[7] One of the least attractive aspects of the "cultural renaissance" was the snob-appeal to an imaginary cultured in-group, who had read everything of value in classical and modern world literature in the original tongues, and hence could recognise the quotations and allusions. That the authors themselves were sometimes not as well-read as they suggested every intelligent reader ought to be was brilliantly shown by Robert Graves in his send-up essay "Dr. Syntax and Mr. Pound" (*The Crowning Privilege*, Penguin edition).

[8] And the synopsis of a novel is not the same thing as the novel.

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Moreover, if a poem may "enact a process in an adequate and lively way so that our life is enhanced", it may also enact it in such a way that our sensibility is hardened, our sympathy blunted, our life impoverished. Kipling, in some of his works, is a case in point.

One cannot, certainly, reduce *The Waste Land* to a simple general statement. As a series of images, all linked to the central metaphor of the title, it retains the power which made it seem so exciting to us in the early thirties—the vision of the deadness at the heart of great cities, of the glories and visions all come down to urban squalor ("fishing behind the gasworks"), of the tension and misery of the neurotic rich. Here, one feels, is a poet living in the modern world, who shows this civilisation as rotten, dying at the centre, and who also evokes the longing for community and wholeness. One did not mind—I still don't—that the poem expresses no positive programme. That's not what it's about.

But the very inexplicit technique of *The Waste Land* makes it easy to overlook, and hence not be worried by, those images and metaphors already present in it, that are certainly not going to enhance anybody's life. Thus in the last section "What the Thunder Said", there is a vision of "hooded hordes swarming over endless plains" which Eliot's footnote makes quite clear refers to the decay of Eastern Europe and the threat to the West as exemplified by the Russian Revolution. It is not difficult to slide over this in the whole poem, in which it is a small though not an insignificant element. But there is nothing particularly adequate or lively about it. A fake process, a yellow-press version of the Revolution is enacted in leader-writers' language. (The same journalists who wrote about the "hooded hordes" then write about the "blue ants" in China now.)

In some poems Eliot's "obnoxious views" (Long's phrase) have much more evidently got into the whole texture, into the way words are used. An obvious example is the use of the word and symbol "jew" in poems like "Burbank with a Baedeker", and "Gerontion". In "Burbank" it is implied that the young American visitor to Venice has had an affair with the aristocratic and decadent Princess Volupine.

> "The horses under the axletree
> Beat up the dawn from Istria
> With even feet. Her shuttered barge
> Burned on the water all the day.
>
> But this or such was Bleistein's way:
> A saggy bending of the knees
> And elbows, with the palms turned out,
> Chicago Semite Viennese.
>
> A lustreless protrusive eye
> Stares from the protozoic slime
> At a perspective of Canaletto
> The smoky candle-end of time
>
> Declines. On the Rialto once.
> The rats are underneath the piles.
> The jew is underneath the lot.
> Money in furs. The boatman smiles . . ."

Rejection not Censorship

I wouldn't want to *censor* "Burbank": I think people should learn to reject this kind of thing on its merits. But how can you deal critically with this "adequate and lively enactment of a process" without noting that what is enacted (very adequately) is a fake process, showing the decline of the great civilisations of the Renaissance as caused (just as Hitler said) by international Jewish capital? Bleistein here is simply the *Stürmer* caricature of the Jew who is Unser Unglück: so, in another incarnation, is the Jew in *Gerontion*.

> "Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp, Blistered in Paris, patched and peeled in London."

D. J. Enright in a recent review argued that to object to these anti-Semitic references is "hindsight": Eliot couldn't have known in the 1920s what this jew-symbol was going to lead to. This is unacceptable. Large-scale anti-Semitism had long been rampant in Eastern Europe and East London was largely populated by refugees from this persecution. French intellectual life had been shaken to its foundations by the Dreyfus case, but Eliot's sympathies were with Maurras and the Action Française, with the persecutors. And the same evil was already being deliberately worked up in Germany. To select that symbol was to make one's poetry turn on the emotional acceptance of a mediaeval lie: the connotation (not denotation) of *Jew* had to be that of the pogromists. Shakespeare, who had perhaps never met a Jew and lived much closer to the mediaeval prejudice, had already begun to see beyond that crude stereotype when he wrote: "Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew ears?"

I cannot find Eliot's *Four Quartets*, "incomparably managed and controlled" though it is, as satisfying as Long does. According to him, to criticise such a poem in terms of its meaning is to be disabled by "a critical doctrine which sets a premium on static denotive language which works, by way of denotive statement, towards simple propositions the truth or falsehood of which one can then debate. Eliot's poem makes no such proposition".

It is true that the obliquity of the statement in *Four Quartets* protects the reader who wants to be protected from having to pay too much attention to what is being said. This makes it much more useful

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than "Burbank" or "Gerontion" or "Triumphal March" to sustain Long's argument with.[9]

There are of course poets[10] who do give one the sense of "the beauty and freedom of the observed world"—the world *an sich*, nature as it is, not as man mythologises it. But Eliot, especially in these late poems, is little concerned with language as a medium for rendering the observed world, except to evoke it distantly as an object for renunciation. His language here is charged with personal, traditional and ritual connotations (what Long has earlier called "all kinds of idealism, guff and flapdoodle") and why not? Take the closing passage Long quotes:

> "When the tongues of flame are infolded
> Into the crowned knot of flame
> And the fire and the rose are one."

Here the fire and roses—as for that matter the flesh and blood of

> "The dripping blood our only drink,
> The bloody flesh our only food"—

are heavily soaked in the associations of these words in religion and ritual. They are quite unlike Cézanne's objective apples. If we didn't know the myth they would not mean the same thing to us.

"Four Quartets"

Furthermore, *Four Quartets* doesn't seem to me a poem where you can say that the denotive use of language is an unimportant aspect (as it is, say, in Kubla Khan). Indeed, although Long quotes Pound "Go in fear of abstractions", a great part of *Four Quartets* is abstract conceptual argument, and not only abstract (as mathematical argument may be) but metaphysical (in the philosophical not the literary sense[11]). And if you do not follow it at that level, you simply are not reading that part of the poem—the opening for instance:

> "Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable."

You cannot just skip from the image of birds and children in the garden to the image of peasants dancing to the images about the fishermen and the bell-buoy to the images of fire and roses. The structure of *The Waste Land* (as cut by Pound) does allow you to do something like this, because the logical and abstract connecting portions are not there (whether because Eliot never wrote them or because Pound cut them out). In *Four Quartets*, however, we have a complete abstract structure of religious pessimism as well as the (often marvellously evocative) imagery: and it is pretty clear what the poet means because it is, more or less, what he says.

In fact *Four Quartets* largely enacts the "process" of the meaninglessness of history (the notion of historical development is dismissed as

> "a partial fallacy
> Encouraged by superficial notions of evolution
> Which becomes, in the popular mind, a means of disowning the past.")

The important thing, as the poem unfolds it, is the loss and painful recovery by the individual of light and wholeness which was available more abundantly in the past. Milton and Charles I were "united in the strife which divided them", because at least, unlike us, they believed.

Of course you *can* read *Little Gidding* without noticing the bad history enacted by the images, but then you can hardly be said to be reading it. I think that as a cultured and reasonably sensitive person, even though heavily handicapped by Marxism, you should read it first with as much willing suspension of disbelief as you can muster, to try and enter into Eliot's mood and meaning, to go through the experience he intends as far as possible. This can only extend your sympathy and understanding. But if you are overwhelmed by it to the point of regarding it as revelation, and absorbing into your bone-marrow his sense that no effort to improve the world or man's material condition has much meaning, then it doesn't enhance the quality of your living. The critical intelligence has to discriminate here. Only it must be your own critical intelligence, not just a Political Committee's: and it has to be exercised after and not before exposure and response to the poem.

What then *do* we get that is valuable from Eliot, despite the bad history and the reactionary and nasty tone which, although it is much more conspicuous in the prose, is nevertheless integral to much of the poetry?

Long will not allow us to say that it is technique or form, and I agree here: in literature of all arts it is hardest to distinguish form from content. I would say it is certain tough insights about life conveyed to us ("enacted" if you like) in the language. I have noted some in *The Waste Land*: those in *Four Quartets* are rather different—they are representa-

[9] This reminds me that a little girl once said to my grandmother, who had taken her to synagogue, that it seemed such a pity one had to say the words of the service in a language one couldn't understand. "If you could understand them", said my grandmother dourly, "you wouldn't want to say them." A good deal of Eliot is like this: it is better really for readers who don't make the meaning out.

[10] For instance, Lawrence often, Yeats often.

[11] The *Songs and Sonnets* of Donne and Marvell's lyrics are not in *this* sense metaphysical at all.

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tions primarily of age, disillusion, the consideration of death and mortality.

Nevertheless, many of the "insights" of the poem as a whole I feel are *not* (at least they are like mescalin insights, sights of what's not there). I don't find myself as reader rebelling at the vision of a life beyond death, though I don't believe in it outside the poem: neither do I rebel (poetically) at the sense of remorse and disillusion (you don't need to be a Christian to know moments of despair).[12] But the devaluation of life, the exaltation of death and nothingness, the indifference to the makers of life and history—this, at length, causes a great weariness.

Yeats

Yeats is a much better case for us really: some of his poems are absolutely bursting with "idealism, flapdoodle and guff" (Long's phrase), but a great many, and especially the marvellous late ones, really *do* have that "freedom and beauty of the observed world" that Long refers to and are close to a living popular tradition too. Interesting here is Yeats' ironic comment in one of his last lyrics, on his own past valuation of glittering and romanticised Irish legend:

> "Players and painted stage took all my love,
> And not those things that they were emblems of"

and his ultimate conclusion:

> "I must lie down where all the ladders start,
> In the foul rag-and-bone-shop of the heart."
> (*The Circus Animals' Desertion*)

In Yeats, and in Lawrence, and in Joyce, fundamentally it is the human sympathy that makes one feel closer to *their* cultural renaissance.

Leavis' contribution is rather different: not sensuous but moral observation and discrimination.[13] (This is very unlike Cézanne's apples on the face of it, but you might argue it was a socially rather than a physically scientific approach.)

Leavis

Leavis' interest in the relations between literature and society—his awareness that it was *about* real life at all—was at the time a great advance on the purely aesthetic (in fact purely Etonian) categories of Oxbridge criticism. But a critic who is concerned with literature in its social and moral implications really needs to know what time of day it is, what kind of social change he is living through; and this Leavis has never understood. It is not just that he opposes Marxism (some of the Marxist criticism he shot down was perhaps not all that good). What is disabling is his utter hostility to, and incomprehension of, science and the labour movement, and his contempt for social evidence of a factual kind. In his notorious attack on Snow, Leavis got to saying how much happier it was to be a Bushman than—not only modern man, but anything modern man by the exercise of science and right reason could attain unto. It was not fundamentally a question of Snow not being as good a novelist as Tolstoy (he isn't, as most novelists aren't). Snow's particular offence was that he said man's life could be made better if we rationally applied our scientific control of nature to the job. It was for that that Leavis attacked him.

Receptive and Critical

On the strength of this controversy alone—the culmination of Leavis' courageous and cantankerous battle with the gods of Cambridge—I cannot feel that his cultural renaissance is wholly mine.[14] I do not believe life has inevitably become ugly just because we have stopped fitting the spokes into wheels by hand, and started to stamp the wheels out in factories. And since history is not going backwards anyway (not to mention that his most intelligent and valuable pupils might be sitting pretty frustrated in that wheelwright's shop if it did) we have to help move it forward, and use all our intelligence, sensitivity and awareness to control and master the process of change in the interests of man. Refusal to see this has soured Leavis' influence and turned his humanity too often into inhumanity. Nevertheless, it is partly through his work that literature teaching has come closer to the facts of the commercial environment.

So I think we need to respond to modern literature and modern art both receptively, willing to learn from it, and critically. We can defend ourselves against a rigid pseudo-Marxist orthodoxy without going back to the old unsatisfactory orthodoxies of "Significant Form" and "word-magic" under more obscure names.

[12] Reading George Herbert, for instance, one doesn't rebel in this way at all: there is faith, but no "anti-life".

[13] I. A. Richards, who was much more interested in the relations of scientific thought and art, is not mentioned by Long: nor is his successor in that role, William Empson, the wittiest radical critic now writing.

[14] I never have felt it was anyway, though much can be learned from him on particular writers.

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